by LADY CHARLOTTE BURY

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THE

MANŒUVRING MOTHER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE HISTORY OF A FLIRT."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE

MANŒUVRING MOTHER.

CHAPTER I.

Sir John and Lady Wetheral were blessed with four fine little girls, who promised to be all the fond heart of a parent could wish; for, as her ladyship observed with pride, "their forms were perfect, and their features were faultless." There was no exuberance of shape to rectify, there was no limb distorted, and, above all, there were no thick ankles, or dumpy-looking hands to shock a refined taste. The four girls were sprightly, lovely little beings, who would in due time create an immense sensation, and ultimately form connexions with noblemen, or with "county

kings,' which was even more desirable. Sir Watkin Williams Wynn was considered "Prince of Wales," and there were one or two gentlemen who might claim the title of King of Shropshire, if immense property conferred that title. The Miss Wetherals were born distinguished looking, and their career would be triumphant. Lady Wetheral loved also an even number; *four* daughters were not too alarming: five or three would have been an indefinite half-vulgar fraction. Her ladyship hated any thing vulgar.

But events are not in our own hands; and the systems we prepare and digest with patient calculation are overturned in one luckless moment by unforeseen circumstances. Lady Wetheral had scarcely decided in her own mind, that five daughters were an indefinite vulgarity, when another helpless innocent appeared to crush her hopes, and disturb her tranquillity. This was, indeed, a blow. All fear of increasing her family had passed from Lady Wetheral's mind so completely, that it was an overpowering disappointment. Five years had stolen away since the birth of

Clara, and now to recommence the troubles and miseries of nursing, with an uncertain vista before her! Suppose she had twelve? suppose she had fifteen? suppose she had five-and-twenty? where might all this end? How very provoking and vexatious!

Lady Wetheral felt it was vain to utter lamentations: she must lie up, and take care of herself, and avoid the children's noise, and do exactly as she had done before under the same affliction. It *might* prove an heir. If so, her ladyship would not complain: a son would secure the entailed property, and keep up the family name and honours. The name of Wetheral would be extinguished, unless a son resumed the honourable title after poor Sir John was gone, and a fine aristocratic-looking boy ranging through the castle would be a proud sight, certainly. He might marry a duke's heiress. Yes, a magnificent boy *would* be welcomed.

Nothing could exceed Lady Wetheral's chagrin at giving birth in due time to a daughter. Her anger was scarcely repressed by her command of temper, or by the lectures

of her unworldly husband. Lady Wetheral loved her husband with the utmost propriety, too, and never acted in decided opposition to his expressed wishes, but she turned in disgust from his arguments, and generally contrived to manœuvre his good nature into an unwilling approval of her plans, by unceasing fluency, and a code of principles, which bewildered and silenced him. Sir John Wetheral only endured the fate of many husbands, who are linked with "remarkably chatty clever women:" he objected, demurred, and gradually yielded to views which he disapproved, but could never successfully combat. His first visit to his lady's chamber, after the unwelcome little stranger's appearance upon the stage of life, was characteristic, and displayed the principles which influenced the heart and conduct of each parent.

"Well, Sir John, shake hands, love; but we need not congratulate each other. I did hope a son might have repaid me for all this annoyance, but here is another wretched girl, and the little animal looks determined to live."

"Glad of it, Gertrude," and Sir John We-

theral stroked its little cheek gently and fondly.

"How can you say so, my love! I have made arrangements for my four girls, which had comfortably and completely satisfied my mind, but this child is an excrescence, which destroys my comfort entirely."

"Include her in your arrangements, my dear."

"Nonsense, Sir John! Anna Maria will be out in five years, and I have arranged that she shall marry Tom Pynsent."

"Tom devil!" cried Sir John Wetheral, impatiently.

Lady Wetheral possessed the enviable faculty of becoming deaf to observations and epithets, which did not harmonize with her opinions. She did not, therefore, hear her husband's exclamation, but proceeded in a languid tone of voice.

"Isabel I have resolved to give in proper time to Charles Bligh, who will be a baronet when she appears in public, for I am sure old Sir Charles is dropsical; and, if that poor sickly Lord Ennismore lives to come of

age, he will do for Julia. Clara is a handsome girl, and I look very high for *her*, but I never dreamed of having another plague upon my hands. I quite made up my mind it was to be a son, and this unlooked-for disappointment worries me to death."

"You are always calculating, Gertrude. You are always sketching out folly, and scheming plans for future mortification. Who the deuce would talk of Tom Pynsent, who is just sent off to school, or of Charles Bligh, whom we have never seen, or of Lord Ennismore, who can't live a twelvemonth, and of poor Clara, who is destined for the man in the moon! Prove yourself a good wife and mother, my dear, and leave the children's destinies to develop themselves as God pleases."

"You men, my love, are very indolent, and always trust to casualities: I never do."

"How the deuce are you to catch Tom Pynsent, Gertrude? If you ladies begin intriguing so early ——."

Lady Wetheral waved her hand languidly. "Don't express yourself so coarsely, my love."

"Your manner is refined, I confess,"

answered her husband, smiling, "but your matter is equally coarse with the speech you deprecate: you are already appropriating your children, without considering their affections, or the characters of the boys you are designing for them so placidly. As far as I can judge, Tom Pynsent is a blackguard."

"Never mind that, my love: boys and men are very different beings. My arrangements are complete on the score of my four daughters' ultimate success, but this unfortunate child is a bar sinister. Her birth will lessen my girl's fortunes."

"She shall be my own child, and my own care," returned Sir John Wetheral.

"By all means, love, and a pretty mess you will make of it: I dare say she will be a 'Jack,' or a very decided young lady, as all girls are who are petted by fathers; but my daughters will be disposed of before she quits the nursery, therefore, her example will not influence their characters."

"What is her name to be?" asked Sir John, as he fondled the infant in his arms, and kissed its cheek.

"Call her what you please, Sir John; she is to be your care now, not mine. If you think a name necessary, let it be your own choice."

"Then I name her Christobel, after my good old aunt, Gertrude."

"A delightful name, my love, and after an excellent model. Christobel was a heavenly-minded, frightful old maid, and your fifth daughter may resemble her in every respect."

"Let it be so. My aunt was a woman of strong affections, and of powerful abilities, and, if this child possesses half her excellence, she will be a treasure to me in my old age."

"I dare say she will be a great comfort to you, love," said Lady Wetheral, in a sleepy tone, "but, suppose the nurse is summoned for Miss Christobel—I am inclined to sleep."

The child was soon taken from Lady Wetheral's arms, and consigned to the distant apartment which constituted the nursery. Sir John also rose to depart, but his lady's languid voice detained him.

"Sir John!"

"Yes, dear."

"I think I shall require change of air after all this."

"Certainly; where would you like to move? Shall we go to the sea-side?"

"No, love, the sea air is too keen; but I half promised the Tyndals to pay them a visit after my confinement."

"The infant will inconvenience them in their present house, Gertrude."

"I do not mean to take the infant, Sir John, on that account; besides, my nights would be dreadfully disturbed; no, I shall leave Christobel with you, love, and only take Anna Maria with me for a fortnight."

"I am not included in your 'arrangements, then?'"

"My love, you know I require great quiet, and at the Tyndals every thing is so agreeably methodical and peaceful, I shall recover my strength quickly; then, you know, dear, the Pynsents live within a short drive; I shall, perhaps, see a great deal of the Pynsents."

"That will be a nuisance, certainly, as you do not like Mrs. Pynsent, but you will not be

disturbed by her frequent visits, for the disinclination is mutual."

"You are so obtuse, love. I am going to the Tyndals on purpose to renew my acquaintance with Mrs. Pynsent, and I trust we shall be very intimate."

"What, with the woman you denounce as vulgar, and contradictory?"

"I have argued these things with you, Sir John, till my patience is nearly exhausted, and you are still benighted on a subject so closely interwoven with my happiness. I tell you I am going on purpose to effect a scheme, and I take Anna Maria with me, to prepossess Mrs. Pynsent in her favour."

"And what the deuce, Gertrude, makes you wish to prepossess a woman so disagreeable as you describe Mrs. Pynsent to be? Why can't you keep away?"

"My love, I tell you Anna Maria is destined for Tom."

"And what has Tom to do with his mother? He is at Eton. You had better take lodgings near Eton, if you want to catch Tom."

"I can argue with you no more, Sir John. Your ideas are so very limited, it is impossible to graft a plan upon them. It is well your daughters have a mother who is anxious to establish them in life, since their father would effect nothing. If I was on my death-bed, my last hours would be horrified by visions of my daughters' pairing off with curates or lieutenants."

"And pray, where do you look for future bishops and Wellingtons, but among curates and lieutenants?" cried Sir John, warmly.

"Indeed, Sir John, you make me sick with your levelling principles," retorted Lady Wetheral, rising in her bed; "my health is far from strong; you have given me a severe headache, and I do request you will never again breathe the word 'curate;' it puts such wretched thoughts into my mind. Fancy Anna Maria shuffling after a fat country curate, smelling of onions, and bawling at a row of charity-children! or, Julia married to your friend Lesley, handing her basket upon a baggage-waggon! Pray, my love, send Thompson to me with some tea, and

never let this disagreeable subject be renewed between us. I think I am very poorly."

Sir John was long habituated to resign his opinions when they affected his lady's health; and, on this occasion, he renounced them with his usual good humour.

"Well, Gertrude, get rid of your aches and pains, and you shall become intimate with Mrs. Pynsent, and catch her son Tom, if it will give you pleasure. I don't like to see you nervous and ill."

"And my love," continued her ladyship, who saw the happy moment was attained for nforcing her wishes, "do not use that very coarse expression 'catch.' You always tell me I am resolved to 'catch' Tom Pynsent. I do not like the word."

"But you say, Gertrude, you mean to give him to Anna Maria; surely you must catch him first."

"We ought never to express ourselves coarsely, my love. I certainly do mean to make Tom my son-in-law, but I have no intention of seizing his person. I did not think *you* were roughly handled, but my

mother decided upon your becoming my husband long before you addressed me."

"She did, did she?"

"To be sure, and you fell into the snare as agreeably as Pynsent will walk into mine. My mother always said that men were puppets if we concealed the wires, and I believe she was right."

Sir John hummed an opera air, and withdrew. Lady Wetheral sunk into pleasing meditations, and was roused by Thompson appearing with a salver, bearing its delicate porcelain. Thompson was instantly under orders.

"I will not drink my tea strong, Thompson, that will do. How are Miss Anna Maria's hands? Do you use the almond-paste every evening?"

"Oh yes, my lady, and she wears her thick veil doubled over her face when she takes the air."

"Very well. I am going to Court Herbert, as soon as I can quit the house with propriety, and I mean to take my eldest daughter with me; therefore, Thompson, I wish her to look well, and during this cold

weather I wish her to remain altogether in the nursery; the wind will give her that blue look which I cannot endure. Then I wish her not to cry much, which always destroys the complexion; so do not let her fight about with her sisters, but amuse her in your room."

"Yes, my lady."

"Let her lie down two or three hours every day, Thompson, for it makes a girl grow straight, and let her dine upon chicken only. Don't vulgarise her with nasty brown meats."

"Yes, my lady."

"And see, Thompson, that Miss Anna Maria keeps on her gloves, and don't allow her to jump and play about. I particularly wish her to look delicate and ladylike at Court Herbert."

"Oh yes, my lady; and then Hatton is so near, perhaps she will see Master Pynsent."

"All in good time, Thompson. I thought I had something more to say—oh, don't let her drink large draughts of any thing, it swells the stomach; and keep her in your room altogether, for she may learn odd words

from the nursery-maids, and that would dis tract me."

"I will remove her from the nursery immediately, my lady," replied the obedient Thompson.

"There now, take every thing away, and keep the door shut, that I may not hear the baby scream. I suppose the nurse is healthy, and all that, Thompson?"

"I believe so, my lady."

"Very well, I think I am going to sleep now, so do not come near me till I ring."

Thompson departed with stealthy steps, and closed the scarlet baized doors which separated the nursery apartments from the wing which contained her lady's boudoir and sleeping chamber; but no precautions could deaden the piercing screams which issued from the unfortunate Anna Maria during the operation of transplanting her little person from the pleasures of companionship to the desolate advantages of Thompson's sitting-room.

Rage crimsoned every feature, and swelled her little heart almost to bursting. In vain Thompson assured the angry girl how neces-

sary the translation would prove towards her future establishment — how impossible it was for a young lady to succeed in after life if her hands were purple, and her nose red, with giving way to excessive emotion. Anna Maria became more intractable, and her three sisters advocated her cause. There was an "emeute" in the nurseries of Wetheral Castle. Anna Maria screamed violently, and the shrill sound was caught up and perpetuated by her party. Thompson was at fault, but she tried to gain time by the protocol system.

"Listen, my dear Miss Anna Maria, while I explain to you the system your mamma wishes you to pursue."

"I won't listen!" screamed Anna Maria.

"We won't listen!" shouted her supporters.

"Then you will never marry Master Pynsent," cried Thompson, with incautious indignation.

This threat raised the defiance of the whole group, and the tumult became deafening. A bell rang violently.

"There, young ladies!" exclaimed Thompson, "now you will get into a fine scrape!"

Lady Wetheral was scandalized at the rude sounds which had penetrated into her chamber, and Thompson's statement utterly confounded her.

"I am sure, Thompson, I do not know how to make arrangements for such conduct. I suppose they must have their own way, which is very disagreeable, but you know I cannot produce Miss Anna Maria at Court Herbert, with swelled features and a sulky face. Let her do as she likes then, Thompson; we can't help ourselves."

Thus ended the insurrection in Wetheral Castle, which even the infant appeared to enjoy, as it crowed, and nearly kicked itself out of her nurse's arms, when the tumult was loudest. She then predicted it would delight in stirring sounds, and become a fearless character.

This *emeute* produced serious results, which Lady Wetheral had not anticipated, but which ever succeeds to power wielded by weak and unsteady hands. Miss Anna Maria be

came gradually dictator, and maintained her opinions and determinations with such unshaken obstinacy, that her mother as gradually resigned her will, and submitted to the imperious dictates of her eldest daughter. Her mind was exclusively bent upon securing Tom Pynsent; and, in the anxious hope of forwarding her plans, she suffered her power to depart into other hands, and beheld her own children forming a strong party in opposition to all her expressed opinions. She lamented her weakness when too late, to Thompson.

"The young ladies, Thompson, put me quite on the shelf, and oppose me in every thing. They will never marry properly. Anna Maria's hands are not so white as they were when I could insist upon her wearing gloves; and Julia's feet are getting extremely broad. She will insist upon walking in easy shoes. All my arrangements are useless; and it makes me miserable to find Sir John as lax as ever in his notions. What a thing he will make of that ugly little Christobel!"

"Every one thinks, my lady, little Miss Chrissy will turn out a very fine child," said poor Thompson, who detested the new dynasty.

"Nonsense, Thompson, don't tell me any thing called Christobel can be decent-looking; and, as I do not attend to her, I am sure her hands and feet will be unproducible, but I never trouble myself about it, for she is Sir John's pet; and men's pets are always masculine, coarse women. Perhaps, when Anna Maria is Mrs. Pynsent, she will introduce her sister to somebody who may not object to a coarse kind of wife; but, I confess, I have no hopes for a young woman called Christobel, and named, too, after a frightful spinster."

This latter conversation took place on the eve of Anna Maria's introduction, five years subsequent to the rebellion which decided the downfall of Lady Wetheral's power, and transferred the sceptre into the hands of her children. The daily occurrences of the nursery are marked by sameness; there is little to vary its routine. Let us turn now to the period when the lives of the sisters began to take their colouring from the sentiments of their parents, and to suffer the trials and sorrows incidental to existence.

CHAPTER II.

The introduction of Miss Wetheral produced an immense sensation in Wetheral Castle. Nothing could exceed Lady Wetheral's delight in the confusion of selecting becoming articles of dress. How great was her pride of heart, her smile of triumph, as she gazed upon Anna Maria in her gay apparel, preparing for her first *entrée* into public! Yet, the occasion was melancholy, and ill-suited to be the chosen hour to launch youth and beauty upon the ocean of life.

It was at an assize-ball, at Shrewsbury, then the metropolis of the north midland counties, where Miss Wetheral burst upon the astonished sight. When the wretched felon, under sentence of death, lay languishing in his cell, awaiting the approaching hour of execution; while the clergyman was speak-

ing hope to the soul, and leading the despairing heart to rest for forgiveness on the mercy and sufferings of its Redeemer; then did the irons which bound his trembling hands vibrate to the roar of carriages which rolled rapidly and furiously to the scene of festivity. Then did the neighbouring country pour forth her highest and loveliest; and the moans of repentant sinners, on the verge of ascending the scaffold, were forgotten in the brilliant throng, and lost in the lively repartee, or well-turned compliment.

The assize-ball was then the arena for debutants; the one green spot which decorated the dullness of a long twelvemonth; the hope, the anxiety of hundreds. That ill-judged hour for gaiety is now consigned to silence. The march of intellect has trodden down *that* unholy practice, and given an outward semblance, at least, of better feelings. It is assuredly better taste.

It was a proud moment when Anna Maria visited the nursery, to display her first ball dress, and receive expressions of wonder and delight at her appearance. The sisters

broke from their romps to examine the ornaments which glittered on her neck; and a row of maid-servants, who were introduced into the nursery to see Miss Wetheral, curtseyed in profound admiration. She was indeed a creature to be gazed at. Isabel received an incurable wound upon her peace from the interview, and never more returned to her once happy games of puss in the corner. Anna Maria was but one year her senior, yet she was dressed in muslin and satin, wore a diamond necklace, and had been to the assize-ball. Why could not she also partake in such delights? Why was she to play with her sisters in the nursery, while Anna Maria was dancing at assize-balls?

Lady Wetheral tried to argue Isabel into docility, but her mind could not perceive the sense of her parent's reasoning. "My dear child, your sister will soon marry, and then you will appear in her place. You know nothing is so inconvenient as having two daughters out at the same time. While gentlemen are disputing which is the best look-

ing, the young ladies lose their novelty, and cannot expect to marry well."

"But, mamma, I don't want to marry; I want to dance, and look as handsomely-dressed as Anna Maria did at the assize-ball."

"Nonsense, Isabel! you are as pertinacious as your father, and just as blind. Wait till your sister is married, and she will introduce you. Perhaps next year may produce wonders; your sister is exceedingly admired."

"So she *may* be, while I am out. I shall not interfere with her, you know, for I shall be dancing all the time."

"I cannot argue with such a limited intellect as you appear to possess, Isabel. I have made my arrangements, and cannot break through them. You will appear when your sister is Mrs. Pynsent. Tom Pynsent was very attentive to Anna Maria at the ball."

"Then I'll beg Tom Pynsent to make haste, I declare!" exclaimed Isabel.

"Do not be vulgar and unlady-like, Isabel, and promise me you will make no coarse allusions to Tom Pynsent. I should be ex-

tremely shocked at such a line of conduct. I do not absolutely say Anna Maria *will* secure Tom, but I trust and hope such an event is in fruition; and if so, you shall immediately be brought forward. Two girls out at once is folly."

Isabel was nothing daunted by her mother's objection; and she returned openly and constantly to the attack, which soon exhausted the few efficient reasons urged by her antagonist. An incident at once decided the propriety of stopping the mouth of an alarming witness, and put an end to further discussion. Isabel was allowed to descend into the drawing-room, after Anna Maria's debut, as Lady Wetheral observed it would prove a judicious step towards giving her manner its first polish; and the transition from the nursery to the trials of society would be less felt by a gradual initiation into its forms.

Isabel was not to converse, or offer an opinion, upon any subject; she was not in any wise to infringe upon her sister's prerogative, or draw attention towards herself; but she was to observe silently the proprieties

of life — to learn by close attention the observances, the graceful bend of reception, the easy flow of local conversation, and the thousand agreeable nothings comprised in receiving company. Upon all this was Isabel to meditate; but no silly compliment offered by a young man was to be understood or replied to by herself; no gracious invitation was to be accepted, no remark whatsoever was to induce her to put herself forward. Upon these hard terms, Isabel was received in her mother's apartments; and she endured the sight of her "senior by only one year," receiving the crowds which frequented Wetheral Castle, dressed with elegance, admired, courted, and surrounded with flattery in all its proteus forms.

Isabel long suffered the keen feelings of envy to war in her heart; not envy towards Anna Maria, whom she equally admired and loved — but envy of that state which she longed ardently to partake. In one hapless hour, Isabel forgot her vow of silence, and spoke, as most backward young ladies *will* speak, when pressed beyond endurance, most

rashly and unadvisedly. Lady Spottiswoode and her daughter had been long dilating on the forthcoming races, and the full ordinary and ball which every one anticipated, when Miss Spottiswoode, turning to Isabel, asked when they should have the pleasure of including her among the gay young ladies. Isabel, thrown off her guard by the question, instantly replied, colouring with her earnest feelings—

"Oh! Miss Spottiswoode, I hope I shall soon be out; but it depends upon Anna Maria's marrying Tom Pynsent." Lady Wetheral for one instant completely lost her self-possession. Sir John laughed aloud. The Spottiswoodes were too delicate to take notice of the remark. They rose and examined some portfolios of prints which lay upon the table, and endeavoured to change the current of thought, by again dwelling upon the ordinary and race-ball; but the shock was too severely felt to be easily overcome. There was a painful silence, and the Spottiswoodes kindly took their leave.

"There!" said Lady Wetheral, applying the vinaigrette to her nose, "Lady Spottiswoode

is gone to report my arrangements to the world, and Isabel's stupid folly has occasioned it. Did I not insist upon her silence?"

"You should have taught your girls discretion, Gertrude," replied Sir John, "by being discreet yourself. Why did you commit your arrangements, as you call them, to the keeping of a child who is suffering under them? You should teach them to practise the art of speaking, before you thrust your children headlong from the nursery into company. You are rightly served: this will prevent all future mistakes."

"You may say what you please, Sir John; I cannot exhaust myself by arguing with such very limited ideas. I am very ill, and extremely shocked at Isabel's conduct: pray let her attend the race-ball, or do what she likes: I am unequal to combat determined obstinacy."

"May I go to the race-ball, then? Shall I go out with Anna Maria, and see her admired, and dance myself for hours together?" exclaimed Isabel, throwing herself on her knees in a transport.

"Go just where you like," replied her mother, languidly; "you will be stupid and vulgar whenever you emerge, therefore time or place is a matter of little moment. Take your own way, for my authority is quite set aside."

Up rose Isabel, attentive only to the words which pronounced her release, and, bounding round the room, careless of remark, she rushed upstairs to make known her triumph.

"Thompson, Thompson! I am going to the race-ball in July. I am to go out with Anna Maria, and dance like mad! here goes!"

And Isabel began dancing round the nursery in the wildest spirits, imitating, to the best of her ability, Anna Maria's elegant manner and step.

Thus was Lady Wetheral a second time defeated in the nearest wish of her heart; but her resentment only extended to keeping her bed for two days, during which she complained to Thompson of illness and excessively shocked feelings. On the third day, she was eagerly and agreeably employed in selecting a proper wardrobe for Isabel.

There could not be a more striking contrast than that which was displayed in the person and manners of the two elder sisters, and their effect upon society was equally distinct. Anna Maria concealed an irritable temper under an exterior peculiarly elegant, and manners strikingly gentle and fascinating: her popularity, therefore, was great, and her steps attended by admirers of both sex, who were drawn towards her by the force of extreme sweetness of manner. All men toasted the lovely Miss Wetheral, and all women confessed she was agreeable as she was charming, yet Anna Maria passed on her way without receiving offers from one sex, or forming a friendship with an individual of the other.

Isabel's artless high spirits and warm heart was, on the other hand, misunderstood, and few did her justice in public. She danced too much, and laughed too loud, and gentlemen sought her often as an agreeable relief from the refined insipidity of her companions, which told against her in society. Lady Wetheral cautioned her in vain.

"I wish, Isabel, you would not jump so

high, and look so pleased with your partners; it is quite inelegant, and will make you disliked. No other young lady looks pleased, and the gentlemen get grinning and talking round you, to the exclusion of your sister and many others. Pray refrain."

"It is my nature to be happy," replied Isabel, laughing, "and my friends may outtalk me if they like. I only desire to chat and enjoy myself in peace."

"For shame, Isabel! you are not aware how you create enemies by such conduct. I was ashamed to see you racing down the middle and up again, with Tom Pynsent, at Lady Spottiswoode's carpet-dance. A young lady should never engross a gentleman's attention so conspicuously."

"Tom Pynsent amused me extremely, mamma: he was telling college stories, and off we capered without caring who remarked us."

"You are remarkably vulgar and underbred, my dear," resumed her mother, "and I have no hopes of your establishment. I am very much surprised at Anna Maria's beauty

failing to elicit an offer; perhaps Julia may do better when she appears, but my hopes chiefly rest upon Clara. Her style of beauty is very magnificent."

Isabel's happy disposition received these shocks with inimitable good humour. She listened to daily remarks upon her want of elegance, and believed in her total exemption from the gifts which Nature had lavished upon her elder sister; but her mind scorned the idea of mourning over a useless grief. She cared not for extraneous advantages which could not reach the mind: she never entered a ball-room without a profusion of dancing engagements; and if she was liked and followed, even in the presence of her handsome sister, what did she care for mere beauty?

Lady Wetheral at last yielded the point, and allowed Isabel to choose her own mode of pleasing. Her taste turned with horror from her "unfortunate Isabel," but she ceased to look at, or remark upon, her *brusquerie*. She told Thompson, "some men took odd fancies to healthy, fat-looking, smiling girls, and probably Isabel might please some old

rich widower or stupid retired bachelor, and marry at last: she would be a foil to her sisters, at any rate."

Lady Wetheral was right: an odd, "retired bachelor" did admire Isabel precisely for her healthy, good-humoured looks; and, in process of time, he advanced, slowly and cautiously, to the attack; but his manner concealed the matter long to all eyes but those of her father. Lady Wetheral was blind to the very *dénouement.*

"I can't imagine why that tiresome old Boscawen comes here every other morning, Sir John, sitting for hours and saying nothing: pray don't ask him to stay dinner again — he makes me ill."

"He is a great friend of mine, Gertrude: I like Boscawen."

"I know you like unaccountable people, love; but he worries *me* to death, and he will sit at dinner between Anna Maria and Isabel. I don't consider Isabel, but he keeps Tom Pynsent away from Anna Maria, and never enters into any sort of conversation."

"He thinks more than he says, my dear."

"I hate people who think: thinking makes every thing worse: luckily, I have quite given up thinking about Isabel, or her loud laugh would kill me."

"Boscawen does not object to Isabel's joyous laugh, Gertrude; he hopes to hear it in perpetuity."

"I wish he would take her to himself, then," replied his lady, gently yawning, and taking up a novel.

"Boscawen has proposed for Isabel," said Sir John, seriously.

"How can you talk such nonsense, Sir John! if the old man proposes to any body, it will certainly be to Anna Maria. I saw he admired her exceedingly — so does every body: she is very captivating."

"Boscawen has proposed for Isabel, however," he returned; "and though he is too advanced in years for a young girl's speculation, yet, if she could fancy him, I think she might be happy. I wish you to speak to your daughter upon the subject, Gertrude. If she has the slightest disinclination to Boscawen,

do not mention him a second time: I will not allow her to be talked into matrimony."

"Then, talk to her yourself, Sir John. I am quite overpowered by the surprise. I was so certain Boscawen admired Anna Maria; but since he has the bad taste to prefer Isabel, she ought not to demur an instant. Boscawen is very rich, and I dare say he will act very handsomely as to settlements. When old men marry young wives, they ought to pay for the distinction. Isabel will be very foolish if she declines him."

Anna Maria at this moment appeared at the door, and Lady Wetheral's ideas excursed at the sight of her beautiful daughter, still so admired, yet unsought.

"Well, my dear, I am glad you are come at this moment; here is Mr. Boscawen proposing for Isabel, and no one asks for you: I can't understand it. Perhaps, my love, if *you* chatted a *little* more—but you must 'take' in time. Old Boscawen is no great things, only he is so rich; there is no saying when Isabel may be a gay widow."

"Does my sister accept Mr. Boscawen?"

asked Anna Maria, in dulcet tones, without replying to her mother's hints.

"She will do so, if she has common sense; but we have sent for her. Your father is to talk to her."

Isabel obeyed the summons, which prayed for her appearance in Lady Wetheral's *boudoir*. She entered laughing.

"I am sure I know the reason of your summons, papa. Mr. Boscawen has written to you."

"And you will not be so mad as to refuse such an excellent establishment," cried her mother, earnestly.

"Stay, Gertrude; I will not allow Isabel to be influenced."

"He can make any settlement you please, Isabel," continued her mother.

"Gertrude ——"

"He is old and ugly, Isabel"—Lady Wetheral rose unconsciously from the sofa in her energy, perfectly deaf to her husband's call to order—"he is old and ugly; but no girl in her senses would refuse such an establishment. You cannot stake a handsome face

against a fortune, which will purchase all a woman prizes most. You will be respectable and enviable, for you will command every thing that is covetable in this world!"

Sir John was distressed and indignant at the sentiment conveyed in his lady's discourse; but he knew it was vain to contend with a mind anchored upon the world. He turned to Isabel.

"I wish to know, my love, if Mr. Boscawen's offer is disagreeable to you. If you reject his suit, *I* will take care he shall not offend again."

Lady Wetheral fixed her eyes with intense anxiety upon Isabel, who promptly replied the offer had been made with her knowledge and concurrence.

"My dear Isabel, I thought you would not overlook such advantages," cried her ladyship, embracing her daughter with unfeigned delight.

"Isabel," said her father, "you wish to marry Mr. Boscawen?"

"Indeed, papa, I do."

"You wish to quit your home, my love, and live altogether with Mr. Boscawen?"

"Yes, indeed, I do, papa."

"Are you aware, Isabel, that in marrying Mr. Boscawen you must become steady and obedient, and submit to his wishes and views?"

"Perfectly, papa."

"Are you aware, my love, that when you have become a wife, you must quit home for ever, and remain with Mr. Boscawen at Brierly, to nurse him in sickness, and console him in sorrow?"

"Oh, yes, papa, I know all that perfectly; and I shall like very much to nurse Mr. Boscawen, he is so good-tempered."

"Yet, listen to me, Isabel, I have much to say," and her father's countenance and manner became impressively serious. "You are too young to understand the solemn vows you must make at the altar. I know Boscawen is a good man, or I should not have listened to his offer when he proposed for a girl young enough to be his daughter. You

must have given him great encouragement, Isabel."

"Oh yes, papa, I *did*. I told him I would be sure to be his wife, if you had no objection, and I hope you do not mean to prevent it."

Lady Wetheral became indignant at her husband's serious view of matrimony, and she had recourse to her vinaigrette, as usual, upon exciting subjects.

"I cannot imagine, Sir John, why you should endeavour to make doubts for Isabel, when such an offer may never occur again—certainly not to Isabel, who has so little appearance. It quite provokes me to hear you raising difficulties about a nonsensical affair of marriage. Isabel will marry like other girls, and get on like other people."

"I do not wish my daughter to marry like other girls, Gertrude. I wish Isabel to be happy and respected."

"And who will deny her being very happy, Sir John, when she has every luxury her mind can invent; and who denies a woman's

respectability when she is rich and well connected? Nonsense, my dear."

"We never agree in sentiment, Gertrude," said her husband, gravely.

"How can I see things, love, in the strange light you represent them? My mother never read *me* such lectures as you preach to Isabel, and I was scarcely her age when I married. I was congratulated on my good fortune, and you know we both drove immediately to Hamlet's. Pray let Isabel enjoy herself."

"Oh pray, papa, let me have Mr. Boscawen," cried Isabel, clasping her hands as the tears burst from her dark, blue eyes. "Do not say I am not to have Mr. Boscawen! and he has ordered me a tilbury cloak upon the certainty of my accepting him; it is to have a leopard's claw as a fastening round my throat! Oh papa, papa!"

"I have not uttered a word about refusing Mr. Boscawen, my love."

"Oh, thank you, papa, thank you!" and

Isabel flew to embrace her father. "My own good papa, not to make me miserable!"

"You would be unhappy, then, if I declined Mr. Boscawen, Isabel?"

"Oh, papa, wretched!—the cloak too of no use, and I had so set my heart upon the leopard's claw!"

"A small 'forget-me-not' would have been in better taste, Isabel," observed her mother.

"No, I particularly admire the leopard's claw, because Mr. Boscawen liked it. And then, papa, we are to drive in his tilbury, and I am to have a fur cap with a tassel, and choose it myself—I shall be so happy!"

There was nothing more to be said. Isabel looked upon every thing connected with Mr. Boscawen *en couleur de rose*, and her imagination pictured Brierly as a home of enchantment. She believed her days were to glide away among rural sports and in juvenile assemblies—the summer would be dedicated to haymaking and gathering roses—the winter would be a continuity of music and dancing. If her father's remarks chased the smile from her lips, as he alluded to scenes

of duty and the cares of a family, they were speedily recalled by Lady Wetheral's enumeration of the comforts which must attach to her situation.

"My dear Isabel, your father alarms you; but, trust me, there is nothing alarming in matrimony. You will have a large settlement, and a handsome allowance, therefore every thing will go smoothly. If you have a family, it won't much inconvenience you. Shut out the nurseries with baize doors, and you will be free from noise. I managed very well, for sometimes I did not see or hear you children for weeks."

Mr. Boscawen was admitted as an accepted lover, and Isabel did not regret her acceptance of a man who listened with admiration and interest to her remarks, and who never turned from her *brusquerie* with the disgust her mother could not conceal towards her. Mr. Boscawen at five and forty looked with delight upon Isabel, whose extreme youth and beauty threw a halo around her uneducated mind. Her rich and joyous laugh pleased the taciturn nature of his mind; he

was charmed by her innocence, and untired by her ceaseless prattle; therefore was Mr. Boscawen her constant and loved companion, whom her eye sought in all companies and at all moments, and to whom her inmost thoughts were communicated. She loved to hang upon his arm, and take long walks with her darling Boscawen; she delighted to drive his tilbury, and exhibit the cloak of long promise—to chat freely, and, as she expressed it in confidence to Julia, to rattle away about nothing, and be just as much admired, as though she spoke sense, like Anna Maria.

Isabel's wedding-day was to herself a day of extravagant enjoyment and agreeable confusion. She was going to a home of her own —to be called in future "Mrs. Boscawen," and to receive the compliments of the bridal-party. There was a large company to breakfast, and the Spottiswoodes were of the chosen number who had the pleasure of congratulating Isabel upon her magnificent prospects. Isabel thanked Miss Spottiswoode for her friendly wishes.

"Now, I am married, dear Sophy, I wish

you were all going to do the same thing. I should so have liked four or five weddings at once! but you will all come and see me, and we will have such merriment; won't we, Mr. Boscawen?"

Mr. Boscawen bowed smilingly to Isabel's appeal, and she proceeded—

"I will drive you all in the tilbury, when you come to Brierly; it holds only Mr. Boscawen and myself now, but I dare say we can squeeze four. Mr. Boscawen is very stout, and his coat covers an acre of ground; doesn't it, Mr. Boscawen?"

Lady Wetheral became visibly uneasy at Isabel's loquacity, and endeavoured to change the subject; but Mrs. Boscawen was too happy and too unsuspecting to observe a hint, or detect a look; her heart was full of hope, and revelling in novel situations. She talked on, inviting every body to Brierly, and appealing to Mr. Boscawen if he would not be delighted to have his house as full as it could hold. The bridal carriage drawing to the door relieved Lady Wetheral's distress.

At the parting moment, Isabel preserved

her serenity, while her sisters wept over the kind-hearted companion they were now to lose. Isabel's gentleness of temper, her buoyant spirits, and warm affections, endeared her to all her family-circle, and they doubly valued her excellence when her society was on the eve of being withdrawn for ever. Isabel smiled as radiantly as usual under the repeated embraces of her weeping sisters, and cheered their grief.

"My dear girls, you see I am married, and, as mamma says, I can do what I like, I mean to have each of you with me in turn, so pray do not cry. Julia, you will come first, and we will have such fun, haymaking! shan't we, Mr. Boscawen? And Clara, when *you* come to me, we will gallop over the country on ponies; won't we, Mr. Boscawen?"

Mr. Boscawen kissed Isabel's hand without reply, and her father led her to her carriage. The new equipage struck her eye.

"Oh, mamma! how you will delight in my carriage! It's quite my own; is it not, Mr. Boscawen? When you come to Brierly, we

will drive about all day. You know you said it would be the best part of the show."

Mr. Boscawen had never approved Lady Wetheral's sentiments, and rarely entered into conversation with her. Isabel's observation had its effect; he bowed very coolly to her ladyship, and ordered the postillions to drive on. The carriage was soon lost in the distance. Lady Wetheral was disconcerted at Isabel's unfortunate speech, and she remarked upon it in passing from the colonnade into the breakfast-room.

"Isabel has married much better than I anticipated; but nothing will heal her dreadful propensity to make remarks in the wrong place, and repeat observations improperly. This unladylike want of caution will ruin her reputation as a woman of fashion, but she is no longer 'Miss Wetheral.' Isabel is now Mrs Boscawen."

CHAPTER III.

Julia was now advanced in consequence of Mrs. Boscawen's marriage, and she stepped from Thompson's room into society, as Minerva sprung from the brain of Jupiter, fully armed and equipped for her vocation. Lady Wetheral was greatly pleased with the *air de societé* which Julia displayed in her intercourse with the new world, her playful badinage with gentlemen, and her intuitive knowledge of the "proprieties." Her mother hailed her as a star of promise.

"My dear Sir John, Julia puts me very much in mind of myself, at her age: do you observe the nicety with which she glides through her ceremonies? She is much more brilliant than Anna Maria, and never incau-

tious, like poor Isabel. I shall look very high for Julia."

"Who is to be the doomed man, Gertrude?" asked Sir John, quietly.

"I know you laugh at me, but I don't consider you a proper judge of daughters' educations. You would let them marry any thing, if a stupid curate or poor lieutenant could persuade you they had good hearts!"

"My daughters' hopes of happiness must depend upon their companion having a heart and principles."

"A fiddlestick, Sir John! Does a good heart buy a carriage and four, or can principle purchase comforts? What would Boscawen's heart be without his income? but you have such an odd way of talking. I don't say that a good heart is not very well in its way, but I do insist upon it, money is the first object."

"Such sentiments, Gertrude, are very unfit from a parent's lips. I trust your daughters may marry early in life, to be withdrawn from your influence."

Lady Wetheral burst into tears.

"This is always your cruel way, Sir John, when I am speaking confidentially to you about my children's prospects. I am sure they hear from me the very best sentiments: I have always entreated them to do nothing improper—I have always told them to avoid publicity, and never lose their place in society. If any of my daughters went wrong, I would never see them again."

"What do you mean by 'going wrong,' Gertrude?"

"Why I mean losing their reputation by a conspicuous flirtation with a married man, or running away from the man they marry, or doing any thing which loses a woman her high position in public opinion:—any dereliction of that kind I never—*never* would pardon, and my girls know it. You always do me injustice, Sir John."

Sir John could not behold his lady's tears unmoved; it was his weak point, and his lady was aware of her power. In this instance she triumphed over his weakness, and won an easy victory, for she silenced the grave rebukes which affected her self-love. A kiss of af-

fection on his part dissipated every woeful feeling on the face of her ladyship: its very remembrance was past away.

"Well now, my love, since you are sorry you offended me, I have a great deal to say. I want you particularly to ask Lord Ennismore to Wetheral. Don't look grave, my dear Sir John; the poor fellow is dragging on an odd kind of existence, but still he lives. Just ask him to spend his Christmas with us, and of course his mother must be included in the invitation. I do not coerce young gentlemen, therefore you cannot have fears for their safety. Ask that poor unhealthy creature, at any rate; his lordship has the option of declining an invitation which does not give him satisfaction."

Sir John submitted to the "arrangement," and, most unexpectedly to himself, Lord Ennismore accepted the invitation. Lady Wetheral could not conceal her raptures; Julia also was pleased, and after a long *tête-à-tête* with her mother, she reported the conference to Anna Maria.

"I have had a long lecture from mamma,

but that is nothing new. She has been anxiously beseeching me to captivate poor measly Ennismore, which I had long decided to do before papa issued his invitation, only I amused myself with assuring her I could not endure such a wretched sickly creature. Poor mamma had recourse to all her essence bottles, perfectly fatigued with setting forth his lordship's titles and rent-roll. She says all her hopes are anchored upon myself, as she is sure you will never marry now."

"Does she?" replied Anna Maria, softly and tranquilly.

"Yes, she told me you had passed two years without an offer, and therefore you must be considered *passé*, as Tom Pynsent did not come forward."

A deep blush overspread the cold pale cheek of Anna Maria, but she made no reply.

"Mamma told me if Lord Ennismore did not attach himself to me, I could but try Tom Pynsent, as she very much wished one of us to be established at Hatton; but though I may flirt with Tom Pynsent, I would not marry such a hunting, loud-voiced man."

Anna Maria remained silent; Julia proceeded.

"You will not make a reply, and how can I go on talking without an audience? Mamma takes great pains to plan our attacks, but she deserts us in our hour of need. I am sure she held up Tom Pynsent to you as the one thing needful, and because you did not take to each other, she is quite certain you will remain single."

Anna Maria's lips were compressed, and no sound issued from their portals. Julia looked earnestly in her face, and beheld tears flowing: she threw her arms round her sister's graceful neck and embraced her.

"My dear Anna Maria, tell me why you weep, and why you take mamma's nonsense to heart? Every body loves you, dear Anna, and you will marry in time, though Isabel did go before you."

Anna Maria's heart was too full to give utterance in words, but a violent fit of weeping relieved her, and Julia's embraces won her confidence. She unburthened her sorrow to this affectionate sister.

"I do not regret Isabel's marriage, Julia, or my own singlehood, so lamented by my mother:—it is not that I deplore; but I was taught to—I was assured—" another long fit of weeping succeeded, and again Julia soothed the choking violence of her sister's grief. An interval of calm allowed poor Anna Maria to proceed.

"If I had not been taught to consider Tom Pynsent as an assured lover—if my mother had not persevered in holding him up to my view as a model of perfection, and woven his idea into my very nature, I should not have loved so fondly the man you despise, Julia."

Julia gazed at her sister in mute astonishment, as she grew energetic in her subject.

"If I had foolishly sought his society, I might have merited the pain I have endured; but, Julia, my mother raved about him:—his affections were considered the only proper aim of female ambition—he was courted by her, and he was always near me. My mother sought his fortune, but I attached myself to his person, and I am cast aside by both. Pyn-

sent, I know, believes me ambitious and sordid, and my mother considers me no longer a safe speculation. I have been the victim of her heedless calculations!"

"My dear, dear sister!" exclaimed Julia, bursting into tears.

"Who can repay me for all my useless suffering?" continued Anna Maria, in still more energetic tones, her eyes flashing fire. "Who will return me the peace of mind I have lost—the tranquillity of my early days—the first happy hours of my gaiety? Who had a right to betray my heart, and trample upon my hopes, when I was too young and ignorant of harm to discover the snare? What has my mother done for me? I was her eldest born, her hope, and companion, and what has she done for me but cast me into misery, and made my life a burthen!"

"Oh, my poor dear sister!" cried Julia, in deep distress; "and under your quiet manner, you really loved Tom Pynsent?"

"I loved him truly and for ever," replied Anna Maria, the fire of her dark eyes sinking into humidity, as the current of her thoughts

dwelt alone upon the man she adored. "I can see no faults in the creature you deprecate —he may be the character you describe, but to me he is sacred: I love him, and though he shall never know it, I will die for him."

"Never more will I flirt with Tom Pynsent, oh, never, never!" exclaimed Julia, throwing her arms again round Anna Maria's waist. "If I had known you cared for him, I would not have chatted as I did last night with Tom. Oh, Anna, how you must have suffered, yet how calm you appeared!"

"I care not who engrosses his attention," replied her sister, as the colour rose and subsided in her cheeks. "I care not who loves him, or is loved by him: I am jealous of no one: I love in hopelessness and misery, and he shall never know my agony. Take care, Julia, how you trifle with Lord Ennismore; these hateful flirtations destroy each other's repose; how selfish, how cruel!" Anna Maria shuddered as she spoke.

"I will not try to attach Lord Ennismore," cried Julia, in earnest accents: "your distress has cured me of all intentions; but speak to

papa, Anna Maria, and he will keep Tom Pynsent from the house. You know how kind he always is."

"Not for worlds!" cried Anna Maria, starting up, "not for worlds, Julia! let no one know I am wretched—let no one pity me, or dare to comfort me but yourself—promise, promise me, on your honour."

She took Julia's clasped hands in her own, and, with an impetuosity belonging to her irritable nature, she exacted a solemn vow of silence. Julia gave her assurances with regret, but the vow passed her lips, and from her the secret never transpired. She was the soul of honour in those matters.

After this confidential disclosure on the part of her eldest sister, Julia repulsed every attention offered by Tom Pynsent, and firmly resisted his efforts to attract her notice. Young Pynsent was astonished by a style of manner so suddenly adopted, and so perseveringly kept up towards himself, and at first he resented the cold indifference by an equal display of composed carelessness; but its pertinacity at length piqued his vanity, and in

the end produced a watchfulness which engrossed his whole soul.

Had Julia flirted on with Tom Pynsent, his heart would have been untouched; and his mind, perfectly aware of Lady Wetheral's schemes, had remained free to sport amid the beauty which surrounded him. But Julia's manners, so unaffected, so perfectly guileless, showed such unequivocal avoidance of his society, that vanity took the alarm, and conducted her victim to the very snare he had so long observed and ridiculed. To be disliked by a Wetheral, when all the Shropshire world knew he had long been a favourite speculation of her ladyship—it was not to be endured, and, *coute qui coute*, Tom Pynsent vowed to subdue the cold heart of Julia Wetheral.

Tom Pynsent was not an Apollo, nor did he possess the fascination of more courtly men, to make the subjugation of a lady's heart the amusement of a leisure hour. Tom Pynsent was good-looking, tall, broad set, and loud in speech, as Julia had described him: he was also empty, good-natured, and immoderately fond of fox-hunting. His very large fortune

in perspective gave him the *entrée* of the neighbourhood at all hours, and if Tom Pynsent failed in the soft elegance of speech, or appeared to some disadvantage in the ball-room among his more polished companions, yet upon his attentions were the eyes of woman taught to rest; and many a glance of admiration was bestowed upon the uncouth, ill-dressed Tom Pynsent, which other more gifted swains failed to obtain.

It was the fate of Anna Maria to love this man; and while the cold, stiff manners of the beautiful Miss Wetheral, chilled the approach of distant admirers, her heart was sincerely and really given to Tom Pynsent. It is in vain to argue upon love, which arises from a thousand causes unconnected with personal appearance. Love takes a thousand forms, and defies the power of reason. When Shakespeare gave the "Weaver" charms in the eyes of Titania, he illustrated at once its blindness and its intensity. Tom Pynsent might have sought and won the heart and taste of Miss Wycherly, who regularly attended the hunt and broke in her own

carriage horses, but who could suppose he had power to captivate the gentle and graceful Miss Wetheral?

Lady Spottiswoode was celebrated for the agreeability and number of her carpet dances. Every fortnight produced a gay society at her large mansion in Shrewsbury; and at her parties the county families mixed occasionally with the more humble inhabitants of the town. It was this very mixture which gave Lady Spottiswoode's parties their decided superiority over those of the neighbourhood; for at her house she possessed the advantage of numbers, and she congregated more youth, beauty, and novelty than her country neighbours could ever boast at their *élite*, but smaller, and less pleasant meetings.

Shrewsbury, at the time of Miss Wetheral's introduction, contained many families whose claims to gentility might compete with their own, but whose income excluded them from distant and expensive society. They were always assembled at Lady Spottiswoode's, and, from the variety and novelty which sparkled in her drawing-rooms, her parties were consi-

dered the most delightful reunions in the country. No one ever stayed away from Lady Spottiswoode's, who had the power of locomotion; and it was at Lady Spottiswoode's assemblies that Tom Pynsent carried on his plans for lowering the pride of Julia Wetheral.

Anna Maria beheld in the keenest pain, but with unaltered expression of countenance, his unceasing persecution of her sister: whichever way Julia moved, Tom Pynsent was beside her, or before her; his eyes were eternally watching her actions, and, when Julia was not his partner, he declined joining the dancers. If Julia observed his fixed determination to be attentive, she heeded it not, for she was dancing and flirting with Lord Ennismore, and her heart disdained the man who had deserted her sister, after a long course of ungenerous flirtation, which meant nothing, and which had injured the peace of its object.

Tom Pynsent's character was, however, open, and above-board: he had firmly believed Anna Maria a party in her mother's schemes, and his attentions eliciting no marked return,

it persuaded him her heart was safe, though her ambition might grasp at becoming mistress of Hatton; Julia would have become the equally indifferent object of an unmeaning flirtation, had not her sister's unexpected confidence seared her feelings towards him. But Tom Pynsent, the long-contested Tom Pynsent, the idol of Lady Wetheral's hopes, was now seriously in love with the lively, fascinating Julia, and Love could not teach his nature to dissemble a feeling which once took possession of his heart. He was found out, and quizzed most unmercifully by his companions, but Tom Pynsent had always a "rowland" for their "oliver." Young Charles Spottiswoode attacked him at his mother's party.

"Why, Pynsent, people say you have no eyes for any girl but Julia Wetheral, and you do look dreadfully cut up when she dances with Ennismore, don't you?"

"I dare say I do," replied Pynsent, in his usual loud tone of voice, "and, if I look cut up, you may depend upon it I am so."

"Then you are fairly in for it, Pynsent," laughed his companion.

"Yes, I am, but I suppose I have no chance with that d—d pinched-in waisted lord."

Tom Pynsent's sentiments were given *pro bono publico*, and a group of gentlemen quickly gathered round him, some laughing at his situation, others sympathizing with him. Tom Pynsent never lowered his voice.

"I dare say you are all quizzing me, but I don't care for that. I know I am in love with a devilish fine girl, so I'm not a bit ashamed, and, if that fellow with his mincing steps gets her, I can't help myself, but I'll be hanged if I hunt till I have asked her!"

"We thought you liked the eldest sister, Pynsent?" said Mr. Wycherly.

"Did you? I didn't, though. I like Julia Wetheral, and I don't care who knows it. Laugh away, boys, and hunt by yourselves, till I come among you again."

So saying, Tom Pynsent coolly withdrew from the group, and stationed himself opposite to Julia, who was still dancing with Lord Ennismore.

Anna Maria's ear had drunk in the whole

conversation, which took place near her and her mother, though both were concealed from observation. Lady Wetheral listened, with joy of the deepest and most powerful nature, to the confession of Tom Pynsent's affection for Julia, and the restraints of society scarcely concealed the exhibition of its effects. Anna Maria preserved her calm demeanour, and bore with intrepidity the acknowledgment of his love for another. A common observer would have pitied the cold indifferent character of Miss Wetheral's countenance; none knew the pangs which were silently devouring her existence. She bore the outpourings of her mother's self-congratulation with unflinching steadiness.

"My dear Anna Maria, I have now married two daughters admirably, for Julia will assuredly marry Tom Pynsent very shortly. Did you not hear him say he should ask her before he hunted? Most likely this very night. What will your father say now? I wish he had been here! but I am sure it is time to return home. Where is my dear Julia! oh, Lord Ennismore is dancing with

her, I see; Lord Ennismore will do for Clara, whom I shall bring out immediately. Julia will be Mrs. Pynsent, of Hatton, and Clara shall be Lady Ennismore. I have established my daughters exactly as I could wish. Poor Isabel did very well for old Boscawen, because she was rather vulgar. Well, my love, just tell Julia we must order the carriage."

Anna Maria obeyed her mother's request, and rose to approach Julia, who was at that moment seated between Tom Pynsent and Lord Ennismore. Julia's quick eye saw her advancing, and she left the gentlemen, to bound forward to meet her sister.

"Julia, the carriage is ordered; are you cool enough to prepare for your return home?"

The words were calmly and distinctly uttered, but Julia was struck by the hollow tones and dull eye of Anna Maria. She took her hand affectionately.

"My dear sister, you are ill?"

"No," replied Anna Maria, calmly.

"Yes, you look ill. I know your countenance well, and it looks very disturbed; tell me what is the matter?"

"Nothing." Anna Maria trembled as she stood. Julia became alarmed.

"Take no notice," continued Anna Maria, "but let us return home. Are you ready?"

"Yes, now this moment; let us go."

Lord Ennismore and Tom Pynsent advanced, and each offered an arm to Julia, who quietly gave her hand to his lordship. Tom Pynsent followed, but offered no assistance to her eldest sister, who clung to Julia's disengaged arm. They joined Lady Wetheral.

"My dear Julia, you are not heated, I hope? I am sorry to call you away from the dance; but I believe it is late, and Anna Maria is fatigued. Sir John sits up for us."

A little change took place among the party, and a little bustle ensued, preparatory to their departure. Julia withdrew her arm from Lord Ennismore for an instant, to adjust her shawl, and Lady Wetheral took immediate advantage of the movement. She glided to Lord Ennismore, and took possession of his deserted arm.

"Allow me, my dear lord. You must take care of us, and give us safely back to Sir

John, you know, according to promise. Anna Maria, I bespeak Lord Ennismore's other arm for you; thank you, my lord, we are very comfortably arranged. Julia, my love, Fate gives you to Mr. Pynsent *pour le moment.* Now shall we bow to Lady Spottiswoode ?"

The little *ruse* succeeded. Tom Pynsent walked to the carriage with Julia, and he opened the subject so near and so interesting to his heart, boldly and without preamble.

"Miss Julia, I wish to know if you like Lord Ennismore ?"

Julia was taken by surprise, but she knew the characteristic bluntness of her companion's manners and speech, and Julia was rarely disconcerted : she possessed astonishing coolness of manners for a girl so young and so recently introduced : her reply was prompt, and quietly delivered.

"I know no right you possess to ask me such a question, Mr. Pynsent."

"I have a right, Miss Julia. If I like a girl, I am at liberty to ask if she is pre-engaged."

Julia laughed, and her laugh led Tom Pynsent to form a wrong conjecture upon the state of her feelings towards himself. He pressed her hand with considerable force, which Julia resented by withdrawing her arm.

"Pray don't be angry, my dear Miss Julia, at a good fox-hunting squeeze: I am not used to press ladies' hands, but the firmer I shake a friend's hand, the stronger is my pleasure at receiving him, and, if my grasp offends you, set it down to my affection."

Julia made no reply, but she retreated to her party; Lady Wetheral was impatient at her return, but Julia's indignation heeded not the hopes and fears which struggled in her mother's bosom; she was offended at Tom Pynsent's misconstruction of her laugh, and she stationed herself by the side of her sister. Tom Pynsent stood bewildered. The colour rose in Lady Wetheral's cheeks with alarm.

"My dear Julia, you have quitted Mr. Pynsent in a very extraordinary manner; I am really hurt; Mr. Pynsent! my dear Mr. Pynsent!"

Tom Pynsent advanced, but his mind was in a labyrinth of confused astonishment:—"Bless my soul, Lady Wetheral, I suppose I have done something wrong; but the deuce take me if I know what brought all this about!"

"Some little misunderstanding, my dear Mr. Pynsent; little misunderstandings, we are told, often lead to agreeable and sincere friendships; dine with us to-morrow, and make up this little fracas."

Tom Pynsent bowed, with a look indicative of pleased stupidity.

"I shall be very happy; I am in the wrong box, somehow; but I can't, for the soul of me, think why Miss Julia ran away from me."

There was a silence of some moments; Tom Pynsent could not catch Julia's eye to learn whether its glance was of good or evil, therefore, he sought consolation in addressing Anna Maria.

"Miss Wetheral, *you* are not offended; perhaps *you* will condescend to accept my arm?"

Poor Anna Maria mechanically obeyed

the request, and Julia again took possession of her partner. The exchange was made in silence, and apparently to the great satisfaction of Lord Ennismore. Tom Pynsent walked forward with Anna Maria, and made his remark upon Julia's desertion.

"Upon my word, Miss Wetheral, I did nothing to give your sister offence, except squeezing her hand, which no lady takes offence at, particularly when a man is making love. I love her better than any woman I know, and I would not do any thing improper for the world; but a squeeze of the hand, now, Miss Wetheral, was *that* a thing to quarrel about?"

A cold unearthly smile was Anna Maria's answer to this appeal.

"I shall have it all out to-morrow, however. I suppose Miss Julia means to have me, as she laughed when I spoke seriously. She does not like that fellow Ennismore, does she, Miss Wetheral?"

"I cannot tell," answered Anna Maria, in a voice so low it was scarcely audible.

"I wish I knew! Miss Julia laughed

when I put the question to herself, which, I suppose, is encouragement, but I shall see to-morrow. I shall speak in time, for fear she should take a fancy to that lanky dog behind us. But who would suppose any woman so shy at a squeeze? If I had kissed her, it might have been another thing! Bless my soul, what odd things women are!"

There was no time for further remark on either side; the carriage was ready, and no pause allowed a continuation of complaint. Tom Pynsent assisted Julia to ascend the steps of the barouche, but she would not address him, or grant him one look to enable him to discover the real state of her feelings. Lady Wetheral bent forward as the door was closing.

"We shall expect you very early to-morrow, my dear Mr. Pynsent, and pray do not treat us as common acquaintance: Sir John was wishing for you yesterday."

"I shall come very early — perhaps to luncheon," replied Tom Pynsent, resting his broad hand on the carriage-door, and fixing his eyes upon Julia, "I have something particular to say to Sir John."

"Oh! delightful!" cried Lady Wetheral, bowing and smiling; "this will be something enlivening to tell Sir John. Something, of course, about hunting or shooting, the idol of men's hearts."

"It's not about hunting or shooting this time, Lady Wetheral."

"Ah! you mean to be mysterious, to raise our curiosity—what can it be? We must be calm, however, and try to wait patiently till to-morrow, or rather till this afternoon, for I fancy it is half-past twelve."

Tom Pynsent bowed, and the party proceeded homewards, enclosing four hearts, labouring under conflicting and powerful feelings. Lady Wetheral's happy, uncontrollable emotions were in strange contrast with Anna Maria's deeply-pained feelings, which lay concealed under impenetrable silence. Julia also was silent and sad; her situation with respect to Tom Pynsent and Lord Ennismore gave her young heart its first painful impressions. Lord Ennismore replied to Lady Wetheral's eager, agitated remarks with an absence of mind which proved his lordship

equally occupied with his feelings; and all this was originated in the well-filled, gay ball-room, which had long been considered the cradle of happiness and the grave of care. So prone is nature to seek suffering under the mask of pleasure, that all hearts court its renewal.

Lady Spottiswoode's parties were the scene of cruel disappointment, and the cause of repeated disquietude, yet did the young and fair of that day crowd to her assemblies, and severe illness alone obliged a reluctant invalid to remain perdue, when Lady Spottiswoode issued her cards from the Abbey foregate.

> ———Oh! that deceit should dwell
> In such a gorgeous palace.

Anna Maria had borne her short but destroying colloquy with Tom Pynsent without giving way to the pain which wrung her heart; and, during the drive to Wetheral, she had restrained the swelling of her soul, and made a strong effort to subdue the tears which rushed into her eyes; but when she had gained the sanctuary of her own apartment,

all restraint was at an end, and Julia bent over the unfortunate girl as she lay extended hopelessly and helplessly upon her bed.

"My dear sister, is this horrible grief indeed given to Tom Pynsent?"

"God knows it is! Julia, but do not ridicule a sorrow you cannot comprehend. When I heard him this night declare his love for you, and when he whispered it to my own self, then I felt as all women feel who find their affection is unheeded and unvalued. I felt, Julia, as keenly as if Tom Pynsent had been admired and loved by hundreds."

"But, my dear Anna, you will not love a man who places so little value—and is so very —" Julia hesitated.

"It matters little," replied Anna Maria, with impetuosity, "who cares for Tom Pynsent, or who expresses astonishment at my attachment. Every woman wonders at her neighbour's choice, and it is sufficient that I am most unhappy. You, Julia, need not tell me I am little valued by him; I know and feel it, but the information does not come well from your lips, who have gained the heart I can never cease to covet."

"Tom Pynsent can never be any thing to me," said Julia.

"And thus it is," continued Anna Maria, speaking in mournful accents. "We are doomed to helpless misery from our birth, and we prey upon each other's peace. Why did he constantly attend upon me, when his heart was free? and why did my mother teach my first thoughts to rest upon a man whose affections she could not ensure me? I tell you, it was wrong!—I tell you, Julia, it was altogether ungenerous and cruel. I have been sacrificed to a selfish policy; and on the very threshold of life my happiness has been wrecked, to make existence a burthen for ever!" She clasped her hands tightly together, and, rising suddenly from her bed, paced her room with rapid steps, talking apparently to herself.

"What was to be gained by my misery? has it soothed my mother's ambition? She spurns me as the object who has disappointed her hopes. Has it gained the long-sought aim of my own anxious love? He told me himself he loved my sister. Am I to bear

all this with smiling indifference? Julia, Julia!" she screamed, "I cannot smile, I will not smile, and no one shall see me smile more."

Julia endeavoured to soothe Anna Maria into calmness, but all efforts were unavailing; her impetuous nature was roused, and it must take its own course: resistance could only increase its fury.

"Leave me to myself, Julia — leave me. I shall be calm enough to-morrow, but now my very heart bursts at the thought of all that has passed. Do not try to calm me! I will not be calm. If I grow calm, it will be from madness, and I shall be maddened by opposition. I tell you, Julia, to leave me, and don't let Thompson come into my room. There, go, in mercy."

Julia became alarmed, but she turned to withdraw.

"Shake hands, Anna Maria, and wish me good night."

"I have no heart for any thing," replied Anna Maria, irritated. "I will not shake hands, or wish good to any one, for it is all nonsense; only leave me now."

Julia retired in silence, for it was vain to persevere in calming her sister's irritated feelings. Anna Maria's nature was composed of fiery particles; and her very composed, general manner concealed a heart full of keen and powerful emotions. It was the intensity of these emotions which required the greatest watchfulness in subduing external appearance of inward suffering: and to the public eye Anna Maria appeared gentle and calm to insensibility. Perhaps only Julia was aware of the real state of her heart; for who could discover a powerful attachment under such cold and calm exterior?

Had Lady Wetheral sacrificed her anxiety for establishment to the domestic happiness of her family, all this misery had been spared; neither perhaps had Isabella been given to a man five-and-thirty years her senior. But at Wetheral Castle all parental feeling was engrossed in calculating possibilities and probabilities of high alliances, on Lady Wetheral's part; and Sir John had too long sacrificed his better judgment to his lady's whims, to recover again the tone of his authority. Since

then the ties of affection were so loosely bound together, and youthful hearts were taught to bend their nobler natures to the selfish dictates of ambition, what hope was there of bright and joyous hours, free to sport in innocence? What hope was there of that lovely confidence and peace which gilds the first years of the young, when parental care — a mother's care—guards the heart from sorrow, and leads it to love all that is good, and to pray against the evil passions? What hope is there for natures tutored into worldly sacrifices, ambitious only of the world's respect? Alas! none.

CHAPTER IV.

Tom Pynsent was serious when he engaged to make an early appearance. He arrived earlier at Wetheral than even Lady Wetheral could expect him, and her smiles were proportionably bland and expressive. Tom Pynsent would have detected and laughed at the affectionate reception which awaited him, had his heart been free to seek amusement in the hopes and fears of Lady Wetheral; but the scene was changed. The parent, anxious for a daughter's establishment, was, in Tom Pynsent's eyes, his prop and stay against the forthcoming proposal; and Lady Wetheral, the "well-known manœuvrer," was at this time only Julia's mother and his kind well-wisher. In short, Tom Pynsent was caught;

and, like other keen-sighted men of fortune, he was perfectly upon his guard, when no danger threatened his heart; but every firm resolution melted, when his eye was pleased, and his fancy gratified.

He was now on the eve of proposing to Julia Wetheral, in spite of his determination never to bow the knee to a Wetheral, or to be "hooked" by her ladyship's gracious compliments. Poor Tom Pynsent! he fell honourably at the very head of his thousand determinations never to visit Wetheral Castle but as an amusement, and never to flirt with a daughter of that house but as a means of raising false hopes in the lady mother's anxious bosom.

"Men's faiths are wafer-cakes."

Lady Wetheral affected to be entirely ignorant of the cause of Tom Pynsent's early visit.

"Mr. Pynsent so very early in the field! it must indeed be a hunting appointment. Sir John will be delighted;" and she held out her hand, smiling a million agreeable wel-

comes. "Where are my daughters? they did not expect you so soon, I dare say. Lord Ennismore has escorted them walking, probably."

Tom Pynsent was disappointed at Julia's absence, but he only looked bewildered.

"I wish to see Sir John as soon as possible, Lady Wetheral; I came early on purpose to see him; perhaps I may find him in his study; shall I proceed there?"

"By all means, my dear Mr. Pynsent, unless you allow me to summon Sir John to us. Am I *de trop?*"

"Oh! no, not *that*," answered Tom Pynsent, becoming somewhat disordered; "you will hear it in time, so you may as well be present, only—"

"Let me lead the way then, my dear Mr. Pynsent;" and she proceeded towards the door of the study. Sir John was seated in his arm-chair, looking over a package of new books; and, for a minute or two, he did not recognize Mr. Pynsent. Lady Wetheral was shocked.

"Sir John, you do not appear to remember

our friend Mr. Pynsent, who is anxious to see you. What is the study, my love, which so engrosses your faculties?"

Sir John rose, and received Tom Pynsent with his usual quiet politeness.

"I did not immediately recollect you, sir; I hope your family are well, Mr. Pynsent; be seated, if you please."

Tom Pynsent glanced at the chair which was advanced towards him, but he remained standing with a red face and an embarrassed manner.

"I hope all are well at Hatton," repeated Sir John, surprised by the silence of his companion.

Tom Pynsent could only comfortably entertain one idea at a time, and his present idea was exclusively the proposal he intended to make for Julia. The repetition, however, roused him from his embarrassment.

"Sir John, I'm come here for a very particular purpose." The plunge was made, and Tom Pynsent's voice and manner recovered their serenity. "I have something to say, Sir John, which I hope will not give offence.

I like Miss Julia very much; indeed I love and admire her extremely, and I wish to know if I have your leave to address her?"

Lady Wetheral threw looks and smiles at the speaker, which encouraged and delighted the lover; but Sir John was taken by surprise.

"Sir, you are — I am, I confess, a very little surprised. You say my daughter *Julia*, sir."

"I wish for your consent, Sir John, to address Miss Julia. I have spoken to her, and she did not altogether refuse me, as she laughed very much; but I think it right to speak to you upon the subject, that all things may be above-board."

"You are acting honourably and properly, Mr. Pynsent," returned Sir John, holding out his hand, which was seized by the warm-hearted Tom. He continued, "My daughter, Mr. Pynsent, must decide for herself, but, if she finds no reason to decline your proposal, I am quite ready to welcome you as my son-in-law."

Lady Wetheral went greater lengths in

speech than her husband, for her joy was uncontrollable.

"My dear Tom—for now I address you as my future son—my happiness will be perfect, should I ever visit you and my dear Julia at Hatton. It gives me unfeigned pleasure to think Julia has fixed her affections upon an object so truly worthy, and so acceptable to her own family. This is indeed to me a very happy moment."

"I will do every thing you wish in the settlement way, Sir John," said the honest-hearted suitor, his face almost purple with gratified feelings. "My father says he will relinquish Hatton to me directly; but I don't mean the governor to quit his own favourite place. Let him keep it for life, you know, for we young ones can move about. He will allow me to make a very handsome settlement upon my wife — any thing you suggest, Sir John."

Sir John was pleased by the open-hearted manner and matter, and his heart warmed to Tom Pynsent.

"Sir, I wish you well with my daughter,

and, if you succeed, we shall easily arrange the necessary form. You have my best wishes, for I like your sentiments, and your father, sir, may be proud of your heart. A good son is a sure promise of an indulgent husband, and I quite approve of your declining to allow your father to quit Hatton, Mr. Pynsent."

"Why, Sir John, there is but a right and wrong way of doing things—if a man does right, he goes on very well; and if he does wrong, why, he will be damned for it!"

The voices of Julia and Lord Ennismore, in playful tones, echoing through the hall, at this moment reached Tom Pynsent's ears. He became alarmed and nervous.

"I wish it was over, Sir John. I could wish to see Miss Julia now, and hear my fate at once. A man gets very awkward and nervous in this situation, I declare!" and Tom Pynsent's red face became ashy pale.

Lady Wetheral undertook to make his burthen an easy one. She even ventured to answer for Julia's affection — this was going too far. Julia had never confided her feel-

ings to her mother upon any subject, and Lady Wetheral's anxiety to secure Tom Pynsent led her into the commission of much injustice. She had sacrificed Anna Maria's peace by thoughtless manœuvring, and now she was creating false hopes in the heart of Tom Pynsent. His situation at this moment was pitiable, and Sir John at once decided upon the necessity of an immediate conference with Julia. Poor Julia obeyed the summons conveyed through Thompson, and appeared in the study brilliant in smiles, and glowing with her recent exercise. She was not surprised at seeing Tom Pynsent, though she did not expect him so early. Julia was never off her guard. No girl in existence possessed her perfect command of feelings, and her self-possessed manner which never deserted her under any circumstance. She was quite prepared for a scene with Tom Pynsent and her mother.

"My dear Julia," said her father, taking her hand, and seating her between Tom Pynsent and himself, "Mr. Pynsent has been here some little time, and he has been speak-

ing on a subject which you alone can dispose of."

"Oh, papa, I will dispose of it in one word," replied Julia, in her gayest manner. "What is it about?"

Tom Pynsent took up the matter as appertaining to himself, exclusively.

"Miss Julia, I have spoken to Sir John upon the subject of last night."

"Well, Mr. Pynsent."

"And, Sir John gives his consent, Miss Julia, if——."

"But I do not give mine, Mr. Pynsent."

Lady Wetheral sat rooted upon her chair; the fountain of her speech was dried up. Tom Pynsent coloured.

"You laughed at my remarks, Miss Julia, at the time, and that was not discouraging, I thought."

"There is no sentiment in a laugh, Mr. Pynsent, but I am sorry you misunderstood my manner. Excuse me, but I never can like you in any light but that of a pleasant acquaintance, and I hope you will not renew the subject. I laughed at your odd way of

broaching your subject last night, but I am sure I could not encourage you, for I left you, if you remember."

"You were very abrupt with me, Miss Julia, but I fancied you were only angry because I squeezed your hand."

Tom Pynsent turned scarlet as he spoke.

"Well, Mr. Pynsent, don't let us say another word on the subject, and pray don't worry me with complaints, for I am speaking my unchangeable sentiments when I say, any expostulation on your part will only make me dislike you; and I really like you very much as only Tom Pynsent, our pleasant neighbour."

"Why, there's only a right and wrong way of doing things," replied Tom Pynsent, rising; "and I have no idea of teazing a woman as if I was digging out a fox, to make her dread the sound of my voice. I wish you well, Miss Julia, and as you will never hear me complain of a woman who tells me plump she does not like me, you need not be afraid of meeting me sometimes. I like every body to be above-board, and say what they mean. I am very sorry to appear rude,

Sir John, but you will excuse my taking leave. I came upon a business which is settled, you know, so I had better take myself off."

Tom Pynsent bowed, and turned towards Lady Wetheral, whose lips were white and compressed.

"I must not take a lady's word for her daughter in future, but you did all you could to give me hope, for which I am obliged to you, Lady Wetheral. Good morning to you."

He passed Julia in silence, but she held out her hand.

"Say we are friends, Mr. Pynsent."

This little circumstance apparently overpowered poor Tom Pynsent, for he made no reply. He held the offered hand to his lips for some time, and, relinquishing it gently, he quitted the room like a man who had suffered disappointment, but who was prepared to bear his trial without flinching. Even Julia fel admiration at her lover's manly exit.

Lady Wetheral was some minutes before she spoke, though her lips had moved without

the power of conveying sounds. She was stupified at the conversation which had taken place before her, and Tom Pynsent was gone without her having the ability of tongue or hand to detain him! Julia had unequivocally refused Tom Pynsent, Hatton, and a settlement! These things were too powerful to bear. At length she gained her voice, but it came hollow and slowly from her parched lips.

"Julia!"

"Well, mamma, what have you to say to me? Do not you think I made a quick affair of my proposal?"

"Do you know what you have done?" said her mother, in the same dreadful tone.

"To be sure, mamma, I do. I have refused great, broad-faced, but honest Tom Pynsent; but now I have something to tell *you*."

Lady Wetheral waved her hand.

"Do not speak to me, Julia; and never let my eyes behold you. I cannot help being your mother, but you are no longer my daughter in feeling, and I command you to remain in your own apartments for ever.

You have given me the bitterest sorrow a mother can experience."

Sir John quitted the room.

"You have brought me in sorrow to the grave, for I shall never outlive this disgrace!"

"Oh yes, you will, mamma: you must live to dance at my wedding."

"I detest the sound!" she exclaimed—"your wedding! You have refused the first match in the two counties, and you will be disgraced and dishonoured among the wise, while I am pitied and despised by all my friends! Send Thompson to me."

Her ladyship became hysterical, and Julia became serious.

"I tell you, mamma, you will live to dance at my wedding, if you could only keep off those hysterics. Would you have me accept two men at once? How can I take poor Tom Pynsent when I am engaged to another!"

"Engaged to another, without asking my advice! Send instantly for Thompson: I am very ill." Her ladyship rang the bell violently. "You have killed me, and disgraced my repu-

tation, Julia, — you have trifled with my kindness and affection—you have killed your mother!"

The servant appeared, and Julia summoned the redoubted Thompson, who hurried to the scene of action. She beheld her lady in her usual state of agitation, when any thing disagreeable occurred. Julia was seated calmly by her side.

Thompson applied her usual remedies, and entreated to hear what had distressed her lady's nerves. Every family affair was confided to the lady's-maid.

"Your mistress, Thompson, is discomposed at the idea of my engagement to Lord Ennismore," replied Julia. "You know mamma has fits now, upon every fresh occurrence."

Julia's words fell upon her mother's heart like the

> "Sweet south upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odour."

She raised her head, and held out her hand to Julia.

"My dear child, you have given me excessive pain most uselessly. Thompson, I am better; you always stifle me with those salts;

take them away. Your obstinacy in refusing Mr. Pynsent and Hatton almost broke my heart. How could I be aware that you had secured Lord Ennismore, Julia? I never saw the least attention on his part, and I had arranged he was to propose hereafter to Clara. Well, I am much relieved. I really fancied you engaged to some horrid creature, like Leslie."

"If you had listened to me, mamma, when I told you I had something to say, all this would have been spared."

"My dear, how can people listen when they are in terror? I saw you parading before me as the wife of some common creature, and all my friends laughing at me — what horrid visions!—but now you will be a peeress, with the glory of having refused the first commoner in the county! My dear Julia, you have done extremely well; I am sorry Anna Maria has effected nothing; but I never saw Lord Ennismore offer you any attention—how did it all come about?"

"You are the only blind person, then, mamma, for Lord Ennismore has been publicly

attentive ever since he came to Wetheral. You must have noticed his manner last night."

"No, my dear, that was Tom Pynsent."

"Nonsense, mamma, it was Lord Ennismore. Every body saw his attentions; so would you, if you had not been running your head against Tom Pynsent. Lord Ennismore has written this morning to his mother to join him. He hopes she will be with us in a very few days. I told him not to say a word to papa yet, because I knew he objected to Lord Ennismore's health, but we shall soon nurse him into good care."

"To be sure, my love!" responded her mother, "Lord Ennismore will find himself a very different person when he is settled into married life, with a wife to watch over him. Tom Pynsent is an excellent creature, but, as you say, he *is* broad set, and red-faced. Too much health is worse than too little, in my opinion; Sir John will see things in a different light, when he knows of the actual proposal."

"He must be made acquainted with my

engagement, sooner or later," observed Julia, musing; "I wish the whole business was over."

"Let *me* open the business to your father, my love, and I shall be surprised if he is not extremely pleased at your good fortune. We will say nothing about it to-day, but to-morrow I will answer for his acquiescence. Lady Ennismore will find every thing arranged when she arrives, and I flatter myself you will be in Staffordshire this day six months. I shall be very proud of my daughter Ennismore!"

Julia assented to her mother's proposition, and nothing was made public till the following morning, when her ladyship found herself alone with her husband, in his study. Sir John opened the conversation, by lecturing his lady upon her sentiments.

"I am called upon, Gertrude, to object to many things which take place at Wetheral, but I was particularly hurt at your observations to Julia yesterday. Had my daughter been condemned by the laws of her country for crimes offensive to humanity, you could

not have expressed yourself in stronger terms than the reproaches you levelled at Julia for declining a man who was disagreeable to her."

"Now, love, that is past and gone. I was very angry with her, and should continue to be so, had I not found her refusal of Pynsent proceeded from an excellent cause, which I am going to explain. You know it is very wrong to accept one man, when you are engaged to another. That is a rule with all proper people."

"Julia has accepted some gentleman, then, Gertrude."

"Ah, how differently you and I feel under such a knowledge! A mother feels so keenly! I was obliged to send for Thompson, when I heard Julia plead an engagement. I was sure it was Leslie, or some such creature, and I was in hysterics, while you have not even changed countenance in your suspense. My love, Julia is engaged to Ennismore, if you do not object, which I am sure you will not think of doing. I congratulate you, my dear, on acquiring a peer for your son-in-law."

"And Julia refused Pynsent for Ennismore?"

"To be sure she did, most wisely."

"Then," he exclaimed, "she has done that which she will repent to her dying day; and you, Gertrude, must be responsible for her misery."

"Good heavens, how you have thrown down all my plans, Sir John, and how you embitter my happy moments! I cannot imagine why you like to terrify me in this way!"

Lady Wetheral trembled, which was ever a prelude to hysterics, but her husband's temper was now tried "to the top of its bent," and he heeded not the increasing symptoms.

"Lord Ennismore has been duped into making Julia an offer."

"I meant him for Clara, love, not Julia," cried his lady, hoping to ward off his reproach.

"And you have given one of your daughters, Gertrude, to a creature diseased in body and mind."

"What does that signify, my love? Julia will not think of his looks a month after her

marriage, and she will be a peeress, with an immense estate."

"You are marrying her to an idiot of quality."

"Fiddlededee, Sir John, he enters a room as well as other people. Who makes a fuss about intellects, if a man of large fortune proposes to their daughter? I should die with shame if you advanced such musty notions before company. Besides, you asked Lord Ennismore to Wetheral yourself."

"I did so," replied Sir John, "I did so; but I believed my daughters must be safe in their affections. I could not suppose Lord Ennismore would attract a woman's love; and I will not believe Julia cares for him. You have tutored her, Gertrude, to barter her soul for a coronet, and your system has corrupted her heart and feelings."

He paced the room in unusual agitation of manner. Lady Wetheral perceived the tide of her powerful influence over her husband's mind was fast ebbing, and a *coup de main* was the last resource of her inventive genius. She became indignant.

"It is well, Sir John, my children have possessed a mother devoted to their interest, since you have ever been indifferent to their well-doing. Had I sat supinely in my room, as you have done in your study, my daughters had passed the prime of their days in insignificance; or, if one had changed the scene, it might have been her happy lot, perhaps, to move into dirty barracks with young Leslie, whom you persist in receiving at Wetheral, in spite of my remonstrances."

"Leslie would not choose a wife from your group, my love. His idea of matrimonial comforts does not jump with your own."

"Don't make me ill, Sir John, with any allusion to that young man; or imagine for a moment we could 'jump' in any sentiment together. Had I sat supinely looking on, as you have done, Isabel would never have married a wealthy commoner, or Julia become a peeress, with the glory of refusing Tom Pynsent."

"Julia has done wrong in declining him for Ennismore; she has given up an honest fellow,

for a poor, ill-nursed, unhealthy creature, with a mind as weak as his body."

"I never can talk with you, Sir John, upon this kind of subject, your notions are so extremely contracted, and you are so blind to advantages."

"What advantages, Gertrude, in Ennismore?"

"Oh, my love, unspeakable advantages. He is a man of rank and large fortune, two very considerable advantages, and, if his health is not very good, it may improve; and, as to his mind, he may not be extremely learned—few men are, who are not destined for professions. He may not be particularly good-tempered, but ——," Lady Wetheral became somewhat confused in her palliatives, by her husband suddenly stopping short in his perambulation, and, fixing his eyes upon her, "every body has something to balance their virtues."

"What virtues does Ennismore possess, Gertrude?"

"I'm sure I don't know; I wish you would not annoy me with such out of the way ques-

tions. Lord Ennismore shows good taste in addressing Julia, and I dare say she will improve many of his foibles. Lady Ennismore will be here next week, and I hope every thing will be arranged in a few weeks, for you could not be so reckless as to withhold your consent—could you now, my love!"

"I will see Julia alone," replied Sir John

"By all means, but do not invent objections for her, and do not distress her with your long lectures, my dear love, for my sake I see poor Julia is very much attached."

"Nonsense! attached to such a man in fortnight's acquaintance—for shame!"

"Julia is *decidedly* attached to Ennismore, Sir John, quite as much attached as a woman ought to be. I think it highly indelicate in a young girl to run after a man, and disgust him with fondness; those things are not done. She is attached very properly, and I beg you will not persuade her to the contrary."

"I shall see, Gertrude."

"You never saw in your life, my love; I never could persuade you to see any thing in a proper light."

"I saw through Boscawen, Gertrude, when you were blind."

"Nonsense! who cared to see through old Boscawen! I never thought about Isabel, therefore, her admirers could not interest me. I was sure she would only attract odd people, and you see I was correct."

CHAPTER V.

Sir John Wetheral's conference with Julia was of long duration, for he found her prepared with a hundred arguments, which bore down every objection: it was Samson stoning the Philistine, and every blow told upon her antagonist. It was in vain he urged Julia to pause ere she committed herself, and became the wife of a sickly husband.

"My child, consider your own health, and the health of the unborn: beware of undertaking the situation of nurse at your age, and subjecting yourself to the irritable chidings of a man weighed down with disease, and prostrated in mind by its effects."

"My dear papa, that is one material reason for my acceptance; I am very much interested in poor Lord Ennismore's sufferings, and you

would not wish me to desert an unfortunate man because Providence has afflicted him."

"You cannot be aware of its results, Julia."

"Oh! papa, I am perfectly aware of all consequences, and fully prepared to meet them. Lord Ennismore is ill — I will nurse him. He is irritable, I know, but I will bear with him."

"I will not press his health, Julia, as the most objectionable point; there are still more powerful ones. I consider Lord Ennismore's intellect enfeebled by disease, and his temper affected too strongly for your happiness."

"I do not consider his intellects below par, papa: Tom Pynsent is ten times louder, and less agreeable than Lord Ennismore: there must be some disagreeables in every body."

"Lord Ennismore's mind is not a gentlemanly mind, Julia; I have observed his actions and sentiments. He is exclusively selfish: a selfish man can never be an agreeable companion for a young wife."

"Time will improve him in that respect, papa. I do not see how Lord Ennismore's selfish feelings can interfere with me; his fortune will command any wishes he may form; I shall not oppose them. As to his temper, I shall neither

see nor hear its display; he must be selfish and violent with his servants."

"And are these the notions you seriously entertain with respect to matrimony, Julia?"

"My notions, papa, are really serious, and I know I shall find them serviceable. I have quite made up my mind to marry Lord Ennismore, and say now, papa, you do not object. Mamma says you will not and cannot object to a match so splendid; now, papa, say yes, and don't fidget about ill-health and temper."

Julia took her father's hand, and kissed it with a gaiety altogether astonishing. Sir John smiled at the action, and involuntarily drew her towards him. Julia took advantage of the movement.

"That's my dear, good papa, I knew you meant to give me pleasure: silence is more expressive than words, and I am Lady Ennismore in prospect, am I not?"

"I offer you counsel, my dear girl," replied her father, gently and gravely, "I can do no more; the world may suppose you high and happy, but, mark me, Julia, you will be the veriest wretch on earth if you marry Ennismore, and, at that moment, my advice will be useless, and my presence impossible — a husband com-

mands you, and supersedes your father. Listen to me, Julia: Ennismore is governed by his imperious and overbearing mother, whose wishes are masked by apparent mildness and great fascination of manner."

"A mother's influence must give way to that of a wife," exclaimed Julia, earnestly.

"Lady Ennismore's influence will give way to no one, and you must succumb to its power if you hope for peace. Her stronghold is the very selfishness she has fostered in her son: all his intentions, every word and action of his, have reference to his mother, who has so long ministered to his besetting sin."

"I flatter myself I shall be able to compete with my husband's mother," said Julia, in a tone slightly tinged with contempt. "I should consider myself strangely altered, if my husband turned from me, to consult his mother. No, papa, I have no fear of that insult — Ennismore has too much affection for me."

"Ennismore is not capable of affection, Julia."

"Well, papa, you are saying the most unkind things possible of Lord Ennismore, and, indeed, excuse me if I say you are quite wrong in ac-

cusing him of want of affection." A burst of tears followed poor Julia's hurried speech.

Sir John again repeated his strong objections to the match, and endeavoured to point out the fallacy of attempting to win Lord Ennismore's confidence—the confidence of a man whose mind nearly approached to imbecility, but who was linked to his mother by the strong force of long habit; and her control over his actions, fixed by constant and unceasing attention to his selfish wants.

In vain he placed before his daughter's mind the misery she must endure when the veil should be torn from her eyes, and she woke to the certainty of being united for life to a man she despised—a man inferior to herself in head and heart, yet possessing neither respect nor affection for the woman he had married. In vain he painted her longing for the home she had quitted, when all its pleasures, its tranquillity, would be of no avail; when she could never more claim or enjoy them—all was in vain! Julia could not, would not, admit a doubt of her power over Ennismore's heart, and she disclaimed all observations relative to the weakness of his capacity.

"It was easy enough," she said, "to fix inca-

pacity upon a young man whom Providence had afflicted with illness, but the proof was insufficient. She would rather say Providence had raised her up to watch over Lord Ennismore, and smooth the rough path he was destined to tread: certainly every disagreeable remark that could be devised was brought up in array before her, yet she could not feel alarmed: she was prepared to meet the trials which her mamma told her belonged to matrimony, especially where poverty presided: poverty would not be the case in this instance, and she must be allowed to say she could not resign Lord Ennismore upon what had been alleged against him. If her papa positively forbade the match, she would submit, but nothing short of his decided prohibition would induce her to renounce a man she liked and approved.

"I would rather follow you to the grave, Julia, than see you the wife of Ennismore!" exclaimed her father.

"The grave, then, papa, will be my portion, if you are determined to be unkind to poor Lord Ennismore, whom you invited yourself to Wetheral."

The father was moved: true, his own hand had penned the invitation, and it availed nothing that

such a step had been taken against his own better judgment. He had brought the evil to his own door, and the consequence was falling upon him even now. Julia perceived her advantage, and again, in gentle entreaty, besought his consent to her marriage. Self-accusation softened her father's heart, as he viewed Julia pleading for a destiny his own error had prepared, and she wrung from his lips a slow and reluctant assent.

"You have forced me, Julia, to say words which will seal both our misery," he said, as Julia clung fondly round him, "and you will one day upbraid me for my weakness."

"Never, dear papa, never! you cannot know Lord Ennismore as I know him; and, in days to come, you will smile at the list of grievances you brought against that poor, suffering, innocent creature."

"I have done that which I shall repent of for ever, Julia; but I yet tell you my judgment has yielded to affection. I warn you to pause ere you marry a man your father disapproves—before you commit your peace of mind into the hands of a selfish-hearted husband — before you quit for ever the home which shelters you! You have drawn from me an unwilling consent, be-

cause I cannot give pain—because I have myself drawn this blank, for I allowed the intimacy; but, Julia, I have said, and I say again, I do not like the man."

"You have said every thing, papa, to dissuade me, and upon me be the misery you suggest, and which I cannot believe will arise from my marriage with Lord Ennismore. Think no more of me, papa, and do not reproach yourself for having made me happy. A few months will prove the mistake of your statements, and you will rejoice in having given me to Ennismore: indeed, papa, you will!" and Julia stroked his hand with a smile so bright, and eyes sparkling with such deep happiness, that her father could only feel it impossible to check her dream of hope. Lady Wetheral at that moment opened the door.

"What an eternity of time you have been closeted! I fancied something was wrong, and a mother's feelings are uncontrollable: ah, Julia, I see all is right by your bright eyes—I see '*trousseau*' written legibly on your forehead, and a splendid one it will prove, I am sure. Of course, Lady Ennismore must have family jewels, which she will present to you. I will resign mine with

pleasure, that my daughter Ennismore may appear in great brilliance."

"You have other daughters, Gertrude," said Sir John, gravely.

"But none, love, that are likely to marry peers. Anna Maria, I am sure, will not marry now: she has let every opportunity pass by. Clara is beautiful, but peers are not plentiful in our neighbourhood. Perhaps a season at Cheltenham —. But where is Lord Ennismore, Julia? Let me congratulate and receive my son: I always admired and thought well of dear Ennismore: indeed, I may consider it quite my own match, for you know, Julia, I always said he must be my son-in-law!"

Lord Ennismore was sought by Julia, and presented in form, to receive each parent's benediction: it was distinctly uttered by Sir John Wetheral, and formed a strong contrast to his lady's melodious and "holyday" terms. As Lord Ennismore advanced, his attenuated form, pallid countenance, and lack-lustre grey eyes, struck Sir John's mind with disgust and regret, which he could with difficulty repress.

"My lord, I am called upon, by my daughter Julia, to accept you as a near relation. I have

stated my sentiments to her freely; and as she allows no objections to take effect upon her own judgment, I have only to wish you happy in proportion to the kindness and indulgence you bestow upon your wife."

Lady Wetheral saluted his lordship as a man of many virtues. "My dearest lord, I cannot but felicitate myself and family upon our new and very dear accession to its number. If your health is preserved to us, we shall have no wish ungratified; and I trust my Julia will long enjoy the happiness which must arise from this grateful and flattering connexion."

Lord Ennismore bowed to each, but not one ray of expression lighted up his heavy countenance, or ruffled the leaden stillness of his *ensemble*. Julia's smiling face lent increased dullness to her lover's looks as he spoke.

"I am very proud to meet your approbation, Sir John, and yours, Lady Wetheral; I expect my mother in a few days, who will arrange things for me. She wished me very much to marry, and I am sure Julia will be very happy in her acquaintance."

"I am sure I shall love her, Ennismore, if it was only for your sake," said Julia.

"She manages every thing for me," replied his lordship, "and I have nothing to do but amuse myself; I think she must be here on Wednesday, and then she will arrange all things for our marriage. I hope to receive you very soon at Bedinfield, Sir John, and you, Lady Wetheral; I shall have great pleasure in showing the lions there, and my mother will explain every thing to you."

"Oh! I look forward to that visit with such anxious pleasure, my dear lord!" replied Lady Wetheral. "I have heard so much of Bedinfield, so much of its magnificence, and so much more of the excellent taste displayed in its internal comforts! I shall, indeed, pay you and dear Julia a visit with pleasure, and I am sure with profit, for the elegances of Bedinfield will suggest many improvements for Wetheral."

Lord Ennismore bowed repeatedly during Lady Wetheral's eulogium, and once more, when the eulogium closed:—

"My mother has done much towards beautifying the family estate; and I am sure your approbation will give her gratification, Lady Wetheral; as also yours, Sir John."

Sir John bent forward, in token of polite no-

tice, but he remained silent; his lady had already poured forth a stream of compliment, sufficient for all the exigencies of the case. Lord Ennismore turned to Julia, and addressed her in his best and most prosy manner.

"I have happiness in thinking my mother will approve my choice; she has long proposed my marrying, and I am sure she will tell me I have done right. I will now despatch a letter to say I am accepted. I should not like the circumstance to transpire through any other means, and she will be then enabled to form her own plans for our future establishment. I am sure she will think I have done right."

Thus did Julia become engaged to Lord Ennismore, and thus did she give herself away to a man perfectly disgusting, had he been unsupported by station and wealth. Sir John did not allude to the affair after he had undergone the painful task of accepting him in the light of a son; but Lady Wetheral did not affect to conceal the triumph of her heart; it revelled in her expression, and lighted up her countenance with unusual brilliance. Julia must be a peeress — the young and lovely Lady Ennismore! — had she now a wish ungratified?—all was absorbed in Julia.

Lady Ennismore's arrival broke through Lady Wetheral's day-dream, and demanded her attention; it was necessary for a time to generalize her feelings and thoughts; to withdraw them from resting exclusively on Julia, and to be again the polite and attractive hostess. The youthful peeress expectant had not attained her honours, and another personage was yet to be consulted and won. Lady Wetheral applied herself to her task with energy and tact.

Lady Ennismore had been many years a widow, and her person retained a considerable portion of beauty and youthful appearance. Her manner was irresistible to those whom she considered it her interest to attach; to all it was fascinating; but to the very few who were destined to be near her, and who became the involuntary agents of her will, to them Lady Ennismore's seductive attractions became a spell, which none could withstand, and from whose magnetic influence no talisman could free their spirit. Lord Ennismore's thoughts and sentiments had their rise in his mother's suggestions, though he believed his actions to be the offspring of his own free will; but her ascendency, silent and wily in its nature, was deeply and im-

moveably fixed in his mind—a wife might never hope to share it.

Lady Wetheral could not equal her guest in diplomatic talents, but she followed Lady Ennismore's lead with excellent tact, and managed her husband's distaste to her ladyship, with great skill. The ladies became intimate upon their first meeting, and were rarely separate during Lady Ennismore's stay at Wetheral. Julia was soon bound heart and soul to her future mother-in-law; her young imagination speedily allowed every virtue to manners so flattering, and she believed herself captivated by excellence, and the irresistible force of kindness as sincere as it was delightful. Every member at Wetheral, save its proprietor, adored the amiable and conciliating Lady Ennismore.

Lady Ennismore held an interesting conversation with her son, soon after her arrival at the castle. They were alone, in her ladyship's private sitting-room.

"My dear Ennismore, do you take your medicines regularly?"

"Yes, I take three pills every night."

"And your powders, my love?"

"Three times a day, just as I do at Bedinfield."

"Julia is a sweet girl, Ennismore; I hope she will not forget your health, or overlook the necessity of attending to your medicines."

"I am sure she will be very attentive," replied his lordship, laying down the book of patterns, which he was copying for Clara.

"I am sure she means it, Ennismore; but a fine young creature like Julia may forget occasionally, and it is so necessary your system should be attended to."

"Julia says she shall seldom leave Bedinfield; therefore, all things will go on as regularly as usual."

"My dear Ennismore, Julia must go into public as your wife; she must be often in society, and she must receive company; her station in life requires some sacrifices, but, should you often be compelled to remain alone, I should be very anxious about your health. I hate the venal attentions of servants; they might poison you."

"But you will be with us?" observed the young lord, in an anxious tone.

"My dear Ennismore, I would make any sacrifice to establish your comfort, but I dare say such a step is unnecessary. Julia is a dear, de-

lightful creature, just the very daughter-in-law I would have selected. I am sure her tenderest cares will be devoted to your health. If, in her gay or occupied hours, she should display an occasional oversight, remember her youth and beauty, and the difficulties of her situation, Ennismore."

"But who will attend to my medicines, and myself?" asked his lordship; "I never can be left alone, you know; who will play cribbage with me in the evenings, as you have always done?"

"Leave that to me, my son; time and circumstance will do much for us. You have chosen the flower of the Wetherals for your wife. Julia loves me, and is guided by me in every thing which relates to yourself; Lady W. is a lady-like goose, and her eldest daughter resembles the automaton in stillness and insipidity. Clara is very handsome, but I see already the germs of violence in her temper. You have done very wisely in choosing Julia; between ourselves, she is easily guided by the person she loves, and she loves me for your sake, Ennismore."

"I am very glad I have given you satisfaction; altogether, I am greatly pleased I am

going to be married, since you like Julia, and wished me to settle. I am sure she is an excellent person, and will take great care of me, but I can't think I shall get on well without *you*, mother!"

"My dear son, do you really wish to be plagued with a mother, when a young and handsome woman becomes your companion? Cannot you allow for a *little* present discomfort, till Julia becomes accustomed to your methods? Your poor fond mother will be a millstone round your neck, dear Augustus."

"I can never be happy without you, mother, to give me all my things in proper time. I have been so accustomed to have every thing done for me, and Julia cannot remember every thing at once, as you do. You will stay with us at Bedinfield?"

"Your affection to me is extremely flattering, Ennismore, and your mother will never be far from you; but consider the opinion of the world, and, believe me, we must conform in some measure to its expectations. I will retire to my jointure-house with proper humility; how long I continue there, will depend upon yourself."

"But Julia does not know my ways; who will give me my pills?"

"Your young wife, Ennismore."

"Mother, I can't marry, unless you will stay by me, and take care of me, as you have always done. Julia does not know I take so much medicine; she knows nothing about illness; I always expected you would live with me when I married."

"You will be very happy at Bedinfield, Augustus, with Julia."

"I know I shall be very ill, mother."

"Hush!" whispered her ladyship, as the door opened, and Julia appeared, fresh and fair as Venus, when she first presented her bright form before the admiring gods; the joyous expression of her face formed a painful contrast with the leaden torpidity of her lover's dreary countenance.

"I am come to announce another gay meeting at Lady Spottiswoode's this day week; all our party must, positively, attend, Lady Spottiswoode says, for her rooms are to boast particular attractions. The celebrated Adonis, Mr. Vyvyan, and the still more celebrated Captain Jekyl, are borrowed for the occasion. Here are notes for each, and all."

"And who is Mr. Vyvyan, Julia?" asked Lady Ennismore. "Every body knows, or has heard of Captain Jekyl, but I am ignorant of the existence of Mr. Vyvyan; comes he from Cornwall?"

"I do not know, but he is staying with the Pynsents, and every body is wild about him. You will obey the summons, dear Lady Ennismore?"

Her ladyship demurred.

"Oh, then, I shall have no pleasure in the thing at all," exclaimed Julia, "and I am sure Ennismore will not care about it if you are absent; therefore, we will remain together at home."

"Dear flattering girl," said her ladyship, smiling, and pressing Julia's hand; "am I so seriously included in your scheme of happiness? I will not hear of your absence from so much gaiety: now is the natural and proper period for enjoyment, Julia, and, since you are silly enough to prefer an old lady's society, I must and will with pleasure sacrifice my own wishes. I will attend you to Lady Spottiswoode's, and witness your triumphs."

"My greatest triumph will arise in having

won your consent to accompany us, dearest Lady Ennismore," replied Julia; and her beaming eyes proved the sincerity of her feelings. Julia, artless and affectionate, was incapable of disguise; and the parentally kind and watchful attention of her ladyship won the whole soul of the object to whom it was addressed. Julia rarely quitted the society of her future mother; and certainly her attachment amounted to adoration in its effects; but, little accustomed to expressions of regard and fondness from her own parent, and sensibly alive to kindness, no wonder the charm was felt, and its influence yielded to, by one so keenly feeling. The attachment of Lord Ennismore, however coldly manifested, and the fascinating sweetness of Lady Ennismore's manners, opened visions of happy futurity to Julia's mind; and she drank copiously of the cup of delightful hope presented to her lips. All was to her a scene of enchantment.

Christobelle was now admitted to range freely through the apartments once so impervious to her sisters, till their fourteenth anniversary allowed them the *entrée*, in form, to the delights of society. Upon Julia's engagement to Lord Ennismore, Clara was inducted into her rights and pri-

vileges; and Christobelle, under cover of her father's protection, was allowed to glide silently among the personages filling the present busy scene. Lady Wetheral was too much occupied in "arrangements" concerning the forthcoming marriage to heed her appearance; and if a kind remark from Lady Ennismore betrayed her presence, Lady Wetheral observed "it was only Bell, Sir John's pet, and concern, altogether—not hers;" and she was allowed to roam about unnoticed.

"Bell" remembered, in after years, how Julia was evermore seated near Lady Ennismore, fixing her eyes in admiration upon her ladyship's fine countenance, and listening to her conversation with eager attention. She remembered Lord Ennismore employed almost constantly by Clara in copying music, or drawing patterns for fancy-work, and Miss Wetheral occupied in drawing, with pale cheeks and humid eyes. She remembered distinctly her mother's gratified look and manner, as she passed from Lady Ennismore to her dull son, with the proud feeling that Julia would soon link her name with that of a baron of the united kingdom. Young as Christobelle then was, she could observe the

difference between Julia's happy, beaming eyes, and the melancholy expression of her eldest sister's countenance, pale as her own white dress, till an allusion to Hatton, or the name of Pynsent, suffused her cheek with a passing blush. She saw and observed much, which became a subject of meditation in after life.

Lady Ennismore demanded an audience of Sir John Wetheral, previous to Lady Spottiswoode's ball, and the interview took place in his study, with every appropriate ceremony and mystery. Lady Ennismore then, in behalf of her son, offered to arrange the settlements, and enter upon the little momentous prelude which usually preceded matrimonial vows. Sir John expressed his surprise that his lordship should require an interpreter and agent in a matter concerning his own affairs. Lady Ennismore was never wanting to herself.

"My dear Sir John, young people are shy of entering into affairs which involve much consideration. Perhaps I have laid the foundation of indolence in my son's mind by acting according to his wishes, instead of compelling him to become his own *homme d'affaires;* but my son's health must prove his excuse, and I shall be truly

happy to resign the reins into Julia's hand in a very few weeks."

"Your ladyship must have enervated his capacity for business, since my lord is unequal to make a settlement upon his wife," observed Sir John, drily.

Lady Ennismore appeared absorbed in calculation, as she ran up quickly a sum pencilled upon a slip of paper, which she held in her hand. The employment prevented her from comprehending the purport of the speech, or it allowed her ladyship a plea for momentary absence of mind. She turned suddenly from her calculation.

"My dear sir, Ennismore's income allows him to settle three thousand a year upon his lady."

Sir John bowed.

"Her jointure will be three thousand pounds," continued Lady Ennismore, "and five hundred pounds yearly pin-money: does that allowance appear too little, my dear Sir John?"

"It may not be too large an allowance for Lady Ennismore," he replied; "but it is a large sum for Julia Wetheral. I trust my daughter

will manage her affairs with prudence and credit to herself."

"I do not doubt her excellence in any point," said her ladyship, in winning tones. "Julia will be the pride of the family who are fortunate enough to receive her."

A father's tender feelings were touched; they were easily roused on the subject of his wife and children. He bowed to Lady Ennismore with more conciliation of manner than he had yet displayed towards her ladyship.

"I believe my daughter's heart to be excellent, and I am sure she will act uprightly in every situation."

"Ennismore and myself justly value our treasure, Sir John, and I shall retire from Bedinfield with the happy certainty of leaving my son in the possession of every earthly comfort. Young people should live to themselves, and I hold it good policy, on every account, to retire. Do you not think with me, Sir John?"

"I agree with your ladyship. I should not wish to be domesticated with young people upon their marriage. They are entering upon life as we have done before them; and the experience of old people is offensive to the unsuspicious.

They must win, through suffering, the knowledge we have acquired: *we* did so, Lady Ennismore."

"I flatter myself, Sir John, we think alike on many subjects. I shall retire to tranquillity and repose in my cottage of gentility, and the young people will make the walls of Bedinfield ring with festivity. I trust we may claim your daughter in a very short time. The settlements will not be long in my agent's hands, and Ennismore is so anxious to present his lady in Staffordshire! May I make interest to salute my real daughter in a month? I am now equally anxious to make my own arrangements; and my first wish must be to secure my son's comfort, before I allow myself to consider my own gratifications."

Sir John admitted that suspense was useless when both parties understood the nature of their engagements; and the marriage was fixed to take place as soon as the settlements should be ready for signature. There was great ceremony in presenting jewels; and Lady Wetheral was the head and front of every thing. There was immense preparation in the wardrobe department, far exceeding, in extent and expense, the ample and handsome dresses prepared for Mrs

Boscawen. Her ladyship explained the necessity of a very distinct line of demarkation in the wardrobe of the sisters.

"Julia marries a peer, consequently she will require a certain style of magnificence in her appearance. Isabel married a man of considerable wealth, but still the young wife of an elderly commoner is not of material importance in society. Isabel must nurse Boscawen, who is scarcely ever free from ague since he visited Holland, and these splendid silks would be useless, fading at Brierly; it would have been worse than folly to have given a peeress's *trousseau* to poor Isabel, but they will both attend your marriage, my dear Julia. It will be a proud day to us all, when you become the wife of Ennismore, a young nobleman possessing peculiar steadiness of character; and, though slightly delicate, his mind is elastic, and his love strongly developed towards you. Independently of his rank and title, I should prefer Ennismore to the young men of the present day. The necklace he presented to you so gallantly are diamonds of the first water."

"Lady Ennismore presented them to Julia, mamma," observed Clara, with simplicity.

"Fiddle-faddle! they were presented in excellent taste. Isabel has no jewels, poor girl."

CHAPTER VI.

When the Wetheral party entered the crowded dancing-room at Lady Spottiswoode's, they caused considerable sensation. It was now publicly known that Lord Ennismore was the accepted lover of Miss Julia Wetheral, and the young couple were gazed at with untired wonder. Each countenance was well known to the company: Miss Julia Wetheral and young Lord Ennismore had frequented every fashionable place of rendezvous for the last three months, yet their engagement evidently procured each personage extraordinary power of novelty.

Eyes which had scarcely allowed a glance to the uninviting figure of Lord Ennismore, gazed now earnestly upon his person, because he came as the acknowledged lover of the handsome Julia Wetheral, and every gentleman glanced with

heightened interest and admiration at Julia, because she was no longer of their number to win and to receive their homage. Julia Wetheral now belonged to Lord Ennismore, and her brilliant light must soon disappear from their hemisphere: she was going to throw herself away, they affirmed, upon a fellow unworthy of such a prize. Could she really love such a poor, sickly creature? far better have taken Tom Pynsent.

Julia was the star of the evening, from the contending opinions which circulated upon the subject of her engagement. She was, however, innocent of the sensation she occasioned. Leaning on the arm of her affianced, and accompanied by Lady Ennismore, Julia passed through the groupes who watched her progress, and gave no thought to the whispered observations that floated around her. She was truly happy, truly blessed in her own bright mental anticipations, and in the company of those she loved. She heard no sounds but the heavy enunciation of Ennismore, and the sprightly musical tones of her ladyship. She saw no one distinctly, not even Tom Pynsent, who stood bolt upright before her party,

with a remarkably red face. He addressed Miss Wetheral.

"I am getting a disagreeable thing over, Miss Wetheral. I heard Miss Julia was engaged to that young sprig after all, and I knew I must meet her some time or other, so I am prepared to do it at once."

Julia at that moment caught his eye, and Tom Pynsent bowed with tolerable command of manner.

"There, that is over. I wish your sister had given herself to a better sort of fellow. That Lord Ennismore, Miss Wetheral, should not carry such a jewel away from us. She did right to refuse me, if I did not please her fancy, but she ought to have chosen a more likely upstanding fellow than the Staffordshire earl."

Anna Maria smiled complacently at the sound of Tom Pynsent's voice, but the subject was distressing. She could not trust herself to continue it. Tom Pynsent nodded and smiled to a group at some distance.

"There's Wycherly and Tyndal wishing me joy. They watched me bow to your sister. I'll just tell them they are d—d rascals for their pains."

Tom Pynsent walked away to put his threat in execution, but the congratulations of the gentlemen overpowered him.

"I say, Pynsent, you bowed like Sir Charles Grandison."

"Pynsent, that was mortal agony, wasn't it?"

"Tom's a cold," cried young Spottiswoode.

"You are all welcome to laugh, gentlemen," said Tom Pynsent, in his invariably good-natured manner. "Some of you are merry because you have not been refused by a woman you like, and half of you rejoice to find the mortification extended to another besides yourselves."

Mr. Wycherly turned towards Mr. Pynsent. "My dear fellow, you cause your own vexation by hunting after a woman who does not care for you. Most men run after shadows, and cast away substance. I married Mrs. Wycherly because she took a fancy to me, and let me see at once what she wished and expected. Faith, it saved me a great deal of trouble!"

"But no girl cares for me, unless she longs for my money," exclaimed Pynsent, feelingly.

"Zounds, man, don't be crestfallen. I know a fine woman at this moment, and in this room, who would take you penniless!"

Tom Pynsent looked aghast.

"Every body but yourself has observed the thing," said young Spottiswoode. "Haven't they, Tyndal?"

"Where are your eyes, Pynsent?" asked Mr. Vyvyan. "I detected the lady the moment you addressed her."

"'Love in her eyes for ever plays,'" sang Mr. Wycherly. "'It makes her rosy lips his care.'"

"'And walks the mazes of her hair,'" added Mr. Vyvyan.

Tom Pynsent gazed on each speaker in silent amazement: no pencil could pourtray the workings of his countenance.

"Who would sorrow for the cold-hearted, when a handsome girl worships the ground one treads upon?" cried Mr. John Tyndal. "Not I for one."

"I wish she would give *me* one of those dove-like glances she bestows upon the dull-headed Pynsent," sighed Mr. Henry Tyndal.

"By Jove, gentlemen, I don't consider myself dull!" at last Tom Pynsent burst forth. "I know many ladies who would like to live at Hatton, though they care little enough about

its master; but I deny your present statement. Who is the lady you allude to?"

"Go and ask Miss Wetheral to dance, Pynsent, and she will assist you in solving our riddle," said Mr. Wycherly, laughing.

"Good heavens! if a woman looked in my eyes, as I saw a lady consulting yours just now, Pynsent, I should feel myself called upon to fall desperately in love," observed his friend Vyvyan.

"God bless my soul! do you mean that *Miss* Wetheral likes me?"

Tom Pynsent uttered the question with an agitated and hurried tone of voice, which caused a general laugh among his auditors, but Mr. Wycherly spoke seriously and looked in earnest.

"You were in love with her sister, Pynsent, and had no time to observe other women. Every one else could read in the expression of Miss Wetheral's manner and countenance her decided liking for you."

"God bless my soul!" again ejaculated Tom Pynsent, "I never saw her look me in the face in my life!"

"My dear fellow, you are as green as a girl in her sixteenth year. Do you fancy a woman

stares at you by way of shewing her true love? Her downcast looks and melancholy appearance betray her. She only brightens up when you address her, and to all other men she is cold as an iceberg. Such are Miss Wetheral's symptoms, and such are all delicate-minded women's manners, when they are not hunting down a fortune. I know the sex, Pynsent."

"Such a woman is worth a thousand scornful dames," remarked old Mr. Tyndal.

"Pynsent looks petrified!" exclaimed young Spottiswoode.

"Pynsent at fault, by the Lord Harry!" laughed his friend Vyvyan.

"Cold scent, Pynsent, after your late run," cried Spottiswoode, entertained beyond measure at poor Tom's *égaré* looks.

The group of gentlemen rallied unmercifully their bewildered companion upon his dull reception of a piece of intelligence which would have raised any other man from the dead. Tom Pynsent's temper stood all jibes with unwearied patience, and when his mind had somewhat recovered the standard of its usual tone, he rebutted their attacks in his own loud tone of voice.

"I don't mind any of your jokes; if a woman

likes me seriously, I shall be sure to return it, and be very much obliged to her. I like Miss Wetheral very much, but I did not suppose she cared for me; how could I?"

"Why, you flirted with her abominably, once," remarked young Spottiswoode.

"Yes, perhaps I did so, but I had no idea she minded my nonsense."

"Young girls are easily caught, Pynsent, at first coming out. You certainly trifled with poor Miss Wetheral," said Mr. Tyndal.

"Did I? then I'll be hanged if I don't marry her!"

A roar of laughter followed this announcement, but Tom Pynsent was nothing daunted; he coolly withdrew from his companions, and sought Anna Maria, who received him with placid manners, and suppressed pleasure.

Tom Pynsent was now enlightened on one material point; and his vanity was touched, by the knowledge that the beautiful Miss Wetheral, so remarkable for her loveliness and extraordinary coldness of manner, did indeed love him in silence, above all his companions, and independently of Hatton! She had loved him in spite of his proposal to her sister! She had borne

the knowledge of her sister's rivalship in patient gentleness! She was at that moment receiving him with kind and conciliating manners, though she knew he had asked another to be his wife! Tom Pynsent's heart did justice to her suffering and affection; and he mentally vowed he would secure a prize so long unvalued, because so totally misunderstood. From that moment he attached himself exclusively to Miss Wetheral.

How did the hours glide by that eventful evening, in the imagination of the two happy sisters! How triumphant did Lady Wetheral appear as she glanced at both daughters!

There was Lord Ennismore publicly displaying his engagement with Julia, and Tom Pynsent was stationed at the side of Anna Maria, in deep, and, apparently, agreeable discourse. Her triumph was commented upon, by the Mesdames Tyndal and Pynsent.

"Oh, be hanged to her!" cried the latter lady, "she has got one daughter hooked on Ennismore, and now she's driving at Tom: only watch her manœuvres. I knew what she was at, Mrs. Tyndal, when she made her visit to Court Herbert some years ago. Miss Wetheral

was a child, but I smoked the meaning of it. She was vapouring then, after Tom."

"Lady Wetheral has been very fortunate with her daughters," replied Mrs. Tyndal. "Mr. Boscawen was an eligible match, and Lord Ennismore of course, in the eye of the world, is of still higher consideration."

"I think, if I had ten portionless daughters, I would not give one of them to that poor decayed fellow, and as I always told my son, Tom; 'If you bring me home a Wetheral, I'll be hanged if I receive her, and my word is as good as your own."

Mrs. Tyndal was accustomed to her companion's manly style of expression; so indeed was every family in the county. Mrs. Pynsent was tolerated in her youth on account of her large fortune; she was tolerated in middle-life as the mistress of Hatton; she was sought in her old age, as the mother of her son Tom. Thus Mrs. Pynsent passed through society without a single accomplishment, or even the attributes of a female, supported by the powerful shield of wealth, and feared for the determination of her sentiments and the coarseness of her remarks, by all her acquaintance.

Separated from her masculine propensities, Mrs. Pynsent was a warm-hearted, well-meaning person, and many young people could bear witness, that if Mrs. Pynsent often offended their ears, or dealt a merciless blow at their vanity, she had also befriended them in their need, and in sorrow or sickness, there was none kinder, or more patient. Why Mrs. Pynsent spoke so bitterly against a "Wetheral" never could be divined; probably some early prejudice influenced her in deprecating the name.

Mrs. Tyndal expressed surprise at Mrs. Pynsent's observation to her son.

"Really, Mrs. Pynsent, I cannot agree with you in such very determined dislike to the Miss Wetherals. I think my sons might make a far worse choice than either lady present."

"By Jove!" replied Mrs. Pynsent, shrugging her shoulders, "I hope Tom will never choose an empty doll from Wetheral: my brother Wycherly hinted to me the other day Tom had been disappointed of one of them, but I gave him my thoughts upon the matter: 'Bill,' I said, 'if any man could prove to me my son Tom had made an offer to a Wetheral, I'd kick him down stairs for his pains, and out of the

Hatton grounds.' My brother Bill never renewed that subject!"

Mrs. Tyndal glanced towards Anna Maria, who was still engaged in conversation with Tom Pynsent, and a smile passed over her face. Mrs. Pynsent caught the smile and look.

"Oh, you need not think about Tom in that quarter!" she observed. "Tom knows I hate the name."

At that moment Miss Wetheral and her companion joined the dancers.

"Your son distinguishes Miss Wetheral to-night," said her friend, with rather more *espièglerie* than their friendship warranted.

"Not a bit of it; I don't believe a word of it." At that instant her eye caught Tom dancing with all his might, and she beheld his *vis-a-vis* exchanging smiles with him: her colour rose.

"By Jove! he's dancing with her a second time, and there's that superannuated father of his, looking on! Wouldn't any one think Mr. Pynsent was staring at a puppet-show? I'll take the old gentleman home."

Mrs. Pynsent rose for the purpose of joining her husband, who was enjoying the apparent

gaiety of his son. Lady Wetheral joined her at that most inopportune moment, and began a subject most offensive to her feelings.

"I am delighted to see your son in such excellent spirits to-night, my dear Mrs. Pynsent: it is an infectious disorder which I already feel stealing upon me. Such joyous spirits generally take effect upon those around."

"What ails Tom that he should not be gay?" growled Mrs. Pynsent. "Mothers court him and daughters flirt with him; what else can he require in a ball-room?"

Lady Wetheral felt piqued.

"The last time I had the pleasure of seeing your son, he was not so gaily inclined. I am glad his dejection has passed away."

"When did you see Tom out of spirits?" abruptly inquired Mrs. Pynsent.

"At Wetheral," replied her ladyship, in a gentle tone, while her heart longed for farther questioning.

"Umph! Men require spirits sometimes, when they are running the gauntlet."

"Mr. Pynsent won my admiration and regard by his honourable manner of acting," continued Lady Wetheral, who had now got into deep

water; "he was always a particular favourite of mine, and I deeply regretted my daughter did not accept a man so much....."

"Your daughter! who are you talking about? —what has my son to do with any of your daughters?" Mrs. Pynsent was evidently beginning to chafe, but she had offended by her allusions to mothers and daughters, and she was destined to receive punishment from Lady Wetheral's hands.

"I am afraid I have alluded to circumstances which have not been made known to you, my dear Mrs. Pynsent, and I beseech you not to remember what has passed my lips: I was of course perfectly certain you were no stranger to certain events at Wetheral, or I would have withheld this unfortunate communication; I thought you knew....."

"I know nothing, Lady Wetheral; and what is more, I have no desire to know any thing: have the kindness to let me pass."

Mrs. Pynsent passed on, as her ladyship fell back with polite ease of manner at her wish; but the iron had entered into her soul. The diamond aigrette upon her green satin turban paled under the flashing of her eyes as she proceeded up the

room towards Lady Spottiswoode. Lady Wetheral confessed afterwards, her triumph at that moment repaid her for many bitter taunts on the part of her victim.

Whatever might be the opinion of Mrs. Pynsent respecting an alliance with "a Wetheral," her son was plunging into the scrape with formidable determination. He had truly admired Julia; he had been severely disappointed by her refusal; but then she never cared for him, and he had applied to her father in doubt and fearful suspicion that she preferred Ennismore. There was a lovely and admired creature positively in love with him—a girl, too, considered by the men inaccessible to all approach—even Vyvyan detected her attachment, and the Tyndals envied him; this was irresistible; and Tom Pynsent forgot every thing, in the flattering, rapturous idea that he was loved by such a woman. His attention that night was extremely marked, and Miss Wetheral, glowing with happy elation of spirits, listened with deep interest to the half-sentimental, half-awkward conversation of her partner. At the conclusion of the dance, which attracted the attention of Mrs. Tyndal, Tom Pynsent became more seriously sentimental and red-faced.

"Miss Wetheral, I think a man may love twice, mayn't he?"

"He may so," replied Anna Maria, "but no one ever loves with depth of affection a second time; how can they?"

Tom Pynsent looked at his gloves, and then upon the ground. "Indeed I don't know."

"The first affection," she continued, with feeling, "unites all the best feelings in their intensity; but when they are crushed, those feelings bloom no more, though they may not be extinguished."

"Sometimes one's first love is a silly affair," remarked Tom, looking inquisitively, yet alarmed, at his companion.

"They may be silly, and they may be objectionable, Mr. Pynsent; but they destroy happiness at the time, and a first sorrow is the bitterest."

"I think I could love a second time just as well as I did at first, if I knew a nice girl liked me, and believed what I told her—" Tom Pynsent stopped. A deep sigh from Anna Maria disordered him, but it animated his courage at the same time.

"I know many people very happy with their second loves," said Tom Pynsent, looking shy.

"Men may love twice, but women never, if they really feel an attachment for an object," answered Miss Wetheral.

"I liked your sister Julia extremely, Miss Wetheral; but she did not care about me, and a man cannot always be miserable about a woman who runs out of his way. I would rather love a woman who liked me in return, and would not check me with stern looks. I am sure I should love my wife very much; and if she objected to hunting, I would never go out more than four days in the week, and I am sure she might have her own way in every thing."

Anna Maria coloured with emotion, and turned from the eager gaze of her companion; her timidity gave increased animation to the speaker, and he proceeded boldly.

"I'm sure any woman need not mind *me:* I am rough, but then a wife musn't mind those little things, and if I swear, it won't be at *her*. A man swears to make himself understood, and sometimes one swears a little for something to do; but my wife need not mind those trifles, need she, Miss Wetheral?"

"That would depend upon circumstances."

"But should *you?*" asked Tom.

"I never heard you swear, Mr. Pynsent—much—"

Tom Pynsent drew himself up with strong approbation and pleased vanity. "Shall we dance again, Miss Wetheral?"

"We have danced together twice this evening, Mr. Pynsent."

"Well, and what then?"

"People will remark," hesitated Anna Maria; "no gentleman dances three times with—that is—I really can't tell."

"But if we like to dance together, what is that to any one?" Tom rose and took her hand. "If you will not dance with me, I shall be sure you don't wish it."

Anna Maria rose, though reluctantly.

"It is not my wish to decline dancing, Mr. Pynsent: I only dislike making myself publicly remarked for breaking established rules."

"Never mind rules, Miss Wetheral; we will dance together, in spite of every thing. Who minds what people say, if we like to dance together!"

Julia and Lord Ennismore passed at the moment Anna Maria was debating with her partner: Julia smiled. "My dear Anna Maria, the

young ladies are complaining of you as a monopoliser; they say you have been keeping Mr. Pynsent from his usual half dozen partners, and there is a combination to vote you out of all ball invitations."

"I cannot allow Miss Wetheral to listen to such abominable nonsense," said Tom Pynsent, privately delighted at the idea of being observed; "she has promised to be guided by me this evening, so we are going to dance together for the third time."

"Come and stand by us then in the country dance." Julia pressed the hand of her sister with affectionate meaning, which Anna Maria returned, as they proceeded together to the set which was then forming. For an instant they were able to exchange whispers.

"Oh, Julia, my heart is tranquil, I am again happy!"

"Glad of it, go on, and mind nobody's looks or remarks." In another instant their partners claimed them.

"I say, father, just observe cousin Tom," said Miss Wycherly, touching her father's arm; "do look at Tom smiling upon Miss Wetheral, and looking so red-faced and happy. That

will be a match, after all; I shall congratulate him."

"Let him alone, Pen, let him alone, and congratulate him when he asks for it. Girls will always be poking their noses into matches, and making mischief. Say nothing to Tom, and say nothing to your aunt."

"But my aunt will be distracted, father, at the match."

"Pooh, pooh, let your aunt and Tom manage their own affairs; they can both take their own parts."

"Gads!" cried Miss Wycherly; "Tom is just going to dance with Miss Wetheral the third time, father; the third time, as I am alive, father! Well, that will do for my aunt if she sees it."

Mr. Vyvyan came up at that moment to request the pleasure of dancing with Miss Wycherly. Miss Wycherly kept her glass to her eye, and continued observing the party as she replied, "No, I can't dance with any body now, I'm looking at Tom." Mr. Vyvyan bowed with an offended air and withdrew.

"Pen, you were very rude," observed Mr. Wycherly.

"Was I?"

"Yes, you were; devilish rude."

"What did he come worrying me for, when I was watching Tom. Gads! father, Tom is saying something to the purpose now. Miss Wetheral has given him such a look: poor Tom, it's all over with him! Where in the world is aunty Pynsent?—somebody find me aunty—I want of all things to see her fire up!"

Sir Charles Spottiswoode begged the honour of Miss Wycherly's hand for the following country dance.

"I can't dance with any of you; I am busy looking for my aunt," replied the lady, seating herself.

"Let me assist you in your search, Miss Wycherly;" and Mr. Spottiswoode seated himself quietly beside her. Miss Wycherly was amused by the action.

"Charles Spottiswoode, you may call this constancy, but I can only consider it tiresome: do go and dance with some lady who has not the objection I have, to being worried. I hate tiresome men!"

"I shall not desire to dance with you, but I

will not quit this place while you remain here," was the reply.

"Men always fancy perseverance will balance their demerits," said Miss Wycherly.

"Perseverance will do much," replied Mr. Spottiswoode, "if a lady values attention. Love is only proved by persevering constancy and untired assiduity."

"A very fine sentiment, Mr. Spottiswoode; but I can meet you in the field of disputation: I have always heard that 'love' was fearful, patient, and easily discouraged."

"*That* love must emanate from the heart of a poor devil, Miss Wycherly; not such a heart as you would prize."

"What do you presume to know of my taste, Mr. Spottiswoode?"

"I know that you would despise a creeping, frightened lover, as you dislike your horse for starting upon every application of the whip. You would prefer a decided admirer who bore with your flippancy, and feared not your power. You have such a lover in me, fair Penelope!"

"You are very tiresome and disagreeable, Mr. Spottiswoode."

"You like me better than you will acknowledge, Miss Wycherly."

"If that is all you can amuse me with, we might as well join the dancing," said Miss Wycherly. "But stay, I cannot; I have just declined Mr. Vyvyan."

"What is Mr. Vyvyan to you or me? the set is nearly completed, and we shall be too late." Mr. Spottiswoode offered his arm to his fair companion.

"No, I shall not dance to-night," said the capricious lady, rising and reseating herself. "My mind is changed."

"So is mine; I am going to flirt a little with Lady Anna Herbert. Chatting is far more agreeable than dancing, in a heated room. Lady Anna has smiled good-naturedly twice. I am glad you had the good taste to decline."

"I said I should not dance, but I did not say I would not talk, Mr. Spottiswoode; how very anxious you are to take up one's meaning." Mr. Spottiswoode only bowed to retire. Miss Wycherly softened the pettishness of her accent.

"Do stay, Mr. Spottiswoode, I have something particular to ask you; you flurry one with your rapidity."

Mr. Spottiswoode sat down. "I am all attention, Miss Wycherly."

"How can you look so cross at me, and speak in such dry tones, Charles Spottiswoode! I hate cross people."

"Then answer me one simple question in truth and sincerity, or I am gone for ever, Penelope Wycherly."

"Gads! how you plague one! Well, what is it?"

"I will know whether you mean to accept me after all this flippancy. If you do not intend it, say so; but I demand a reply."

"Then you wish to flirt with Lady Anna, Mr. Charles, and you think

> 'It is good to be off with the old love,
> Before you be on with the new.'"

"You have not answered me," returned Mr. Spottiswoode, seriously; "answer me, as you hope yourself to be fairly treated."

"I vow I don't know what I mean; it is very difficult to make one's choice among such a variety of Lords of the creation. I have not been introduced to Mr. Jones yet. I can't say I admire Tom's friend."

"I am answered, Miss Wycherly; I wish

you good night." Mr. Spottiswoode turned from the coquette, and walked up the dancing-room, without attending to Miss Wycherly's recal. The lady became alarmed. Was Mr. Spottiswoode's movement really intentional, or was he showing her how indifferently he could take leave, to compel her into acceptance? There he was positively talking to Lady Anna Herbert, and looking perfectly composed. Lady Anna was a notorious flirt, but she should not entrap Charles Spottiswoode! Miss Wycherly was not accustomed to be treated with *nonchalance;* and that Mr. Spottiswoode, her lover of long standing, should summon courage enough to stand upon the defensive against her coquetry, piqued her to the soul. She sought Julia, who was dancing with Lord Ennismore.

"Miss Wycherly unattended!" cried Mr. Henry Tyndal, as he met her on her way to the dancers, "take my arm."

"Be quiet," said the lady, passing on with her glass raised to her eye, "do be quiet."

"Miss Wycherly, you are after mischief; you are darting arrows at some poor wretch through that missile," continued young Tyndal, following her.

"I am darting nothing, unless you are my arrow, in which case I should delight to throw you to an incredible distance."

"You are witty, Miss Wycherly," returned young Tyndal, "and whenever you are witty, you are angry."

Miss Wycherly made no reply; she saw and approached Julia.

"Julia Wetheral, I beseech you to do me a service."

"I will gladly assist you, if it is in my power," replied Julia; "what is required of me?"

"Oh, leave the dance, and listen to me. Lord Ennismore will follow us, when he perceives you have quitted the set; here let us be seated, and I will tell you my anxiety."

Julia smilingly listened to Miss Wycherly's statement of her little coquetry, and the offended departure of Mr. Spottiswoode.

"And now," she said, "I know you will help me, and just make my peace with Charles. I won't give him the triumph of knowing he has frightened me, but in your playful way you can discover what Spottiswoode means. He has positively threatened to flirt with Lady Anna;

and, whether I like him or not, he must not appear unconcerned with another woman. My dear, that would kill me. I can't part with Charles Spottiswoode in that way, you know, and I just want you to sound him. Now go, there's a dear creature; leave Lord Ennismore with me."

Julia undertook the mission, and Lord Ennismore consigned himself, not to the care of Miss Wycherly, but to the side of his lady mother.

"My dear son, I have witnessed Julia's flight, and your consternation," said her ladyship; "you are fortunate in possessing a foolishly-fond mother to retire to in these emergencies."

"I am always very glad to come to you, mother," replied the poor effeminate young man, seating himself between her ladyship and Lady Wetheral.

Julia was some minutes in playful conversation with Mr. Spottiswoode, and Miss Wycherly watched her movements with eager attention; at last Julia approached.

"Well, my dear, what does he say? Tell me at once, is he going to dance with Lady Anna?"

"Mr. Spottiswoode is very much hurt, Pene-

lope, and, if you are not cautious, you will lose him."

"Oh, my dear girl, don't say so. Lose him? No, I'll be hanged, as my aunt says, if he gets away from me, to be one of Lady Anna's swains! I must come down, I see, though it grates me dreadfully."

"Make haste, as you value Mr. Spottiswoode," replied Julia, "or he will be dancing with Lady Anna. He is looking at us at this moment; now, Penelope, smile, smile, and beckon him to you for ever—don't trifle—now, now, Penelope!"

"My dear, the smile would kill me. I can't smile at Spottiswoode, to show him his power, and make him impudent. No, I cannot smile yet, Julia."

"There, Penelope, he has asked Lady Anna to dance, and they are standing up! You have lost him by your foolish coquetting, upon my honour!"

Miss Wycherly turned pale, but her feelings struggled with pride. "Oh, well then, let him dance away, I care not. It is of little consequence whether Mr. Spottiswoode prefers Lady Anna or myself. I shall not condescend to beg

pardon for any thing I chose to say to a silly creature, who cannot command his temper."

"For shame, Penelope! you *do* care, and you *do* mind Mr. Spottiswoode dancing with Lady Anna; when the dance is ended, tell him you have done wrong."

"He might have seen by my looks, Julia, I was not in earnest, or, at least, that I did not mean him to think so."

"Then tell him so, Penelope."

"Not I, indeed. I never will submit to own myself wrong to a man before marriage, or after either, if I can help it. Spottiswoode may rue the hour he offended me, for never will I condescend to ask him to return to a woman whom he chooses to leave for such a person as Lady Anna. Any other girl I could have borne patiently. This I will not forgive, for he knew it would vex me! hang me, *à la* Pynsent, if I do not repay him in kind."

"I can be of no further use, Penelope?"

"None, Julia, but I thank you for what you have done, though it has proved ineffectual. Do not let me detain you from your party."

Julia endeavoured to appease her companion, but her lover's careless indifference gave deep

offence to Miss Wycherly, and she persisted in maintaining an equal appearance of light-hearted manner, to deceive and distress Mr. Spottiswoode. She was not long without materials to assist her design; Mr. Henry Tyndal again applying to her, Miss Wycherly accepted him as a partner, and she passed her lover in the country dance with inimitably affected composure and gaiety. How did that really attached couple endeavour to vie with each other in assuming a coldness foreign to their hearts; and how wretchedly did they pass the remainder of the evening in a state of miserable watching and suffering! Miss Wycherly, in her most laughing dialogue with Henry Tyndal, cast perturbed and anxious looks towards Lady Anna Herbert, who was listening with smiling and marked attention to Mr. Spottiswoode's compliments. Her heart felt withered, yet she redoubled her gaiety; Miss Wycherly was almost noisy in her mirth, and the sound of her voice disturbed the serenity of Mr. Spottiswoode, and made him falter in his own sallies. Lady Anna rebuked him.

"How now, Mr. Spottiswoode! you have said the same thing three times consecutively. What am I to understand by this absence of ideas?"

"You have confounded them, Lady Anna."

"I did not flatter myself I had power to confound your learned mind, Mr. Spottiswoode," returned the lady.

"I shall not be the first, nor the last, whom your ladyship has confounded; all our heads become turned in your society."

"Very well; I declare I shall tell Miss Wycherly how you flirt."

"Pray do, Lady Anna; Miss Wycherly is coming down with Mr. Tyndal."

"Very well; Miss Wycherly, what do you think Mr. Spottiswoode says?"

"Cross hands and back again, and never mind what Mr. Spottiswoode says," said Miss Wycherly. "I am flying down the middle." Away she went.

"I saw Miss Wycherly did not touch you in cross hands, Mr. Spottiswoode, but here she comes again."

The party made their *pousette* in high glee, Miss Wycherly appearing wholly engaged in some joke with Henry Tyndal, and Mr. Spottiswoode showering compliments upon Lady Anna. Tom Pynsent and Anna Maria, who stood near

the set, and heard the dialogue, were much amused.

"Cousin Pen has quarrelled with Spottiswoode," he remarked, "and there will be a pretty battle; hear how he is laying it into Lady Anna Herbert. I should not like quarrelling, should you, Miss Wetheral?"

"Oh, no, surely not."

"Quarrelling is a rum sort of going on, Miss Wetheral. I don't think you ever quarrel."

"Never, when I have my own way," replied Miss Wetheral, smiling.

"I'm sure my wife would have her own way, if that was all she cared about, Miss Wetheral."

Miss Wetheral was silent.

"I wish I was married to a woman who would be good-natured, and not given to be huffed upon all occasions," resumed Tom Pynsent. "I think a bachelor's life very uncomfortable."

Miss Wetheral trembled violently, but she loved Tom Pynsent too fondly to be able to assist his meaning; her heart beat audibly, but she remained silent.

"You ride on horseback, Miss Wetheral, very often, don't you?"

"Yes, frequently."

"I wish you would let me ride with you; I am sure you do not know half the country about Wetheral. I suppose I may escort you, Miss Wetheral?" Tom Pynsent began to feel great stoutness of heart, in proportion as Anna Maria grew timid and embarrassed.

"I shall be happy—we shall feel ——." She hesitated.

"To be sure; well, then, I shall be at Wetheral to-morrow, and, if you are not fatigued, I will show you a monstrous fine view."

"But your hunting-day is to-morrow, Mr. Pynsent."

"Never mind hunting for a day or so, Miss Wetheral; I don't mind being laughed at. I want very much to show you that view, so mind we are engaged to-morrow."

How lightly did Miss Wetheral's heart beat at that moment! how was she repaid for months of miserable feeling!

It was during the bustle of breaking up, that Miss Wycherly glided towards Julia, and unbosomed her feelings.

"My dear soul, I am the most wretched woman existing; that creature has vexed me to the

soul with his flirtation, and my only hope is that I have given him a tweak in return."

"Take care, Penelope!"

"Oh, I shall care about nothing but repiquing. As long as Spottiswoode flirts with Lady Anna, so long I shall flirt with that half spoony Tyndal junior, if my heart breaks under it. How happy you are, Julia, and how miserable am I! You have chained your lover, whereas, mine bounds away at a touch. Now, there, look at him, cloaking Lady Anna, as if she was made of spun glass, and bringing her just under my very eyes. I will bear that man's insult with perfect gaiety —watch me now—good night!"

Miss Wycherly passed on with apparent light-heartedness, and addressed Lady Anna Herbert.

"How you have footed it this night, Lady Anna! Mr. Henry Tyndal declares you are the pride of Shropshire in a ball-room. I was quite jealous. Lord Farnborough is waiting for you, with Lady Jessy, but I shall tell them you are too agreeably occupied to move away yet."

"Oh, no, really I am quite ready," replied her ladyship: "but Mr. Spottiswoode's compliments are so lengthy, they will never arrive at a

conclusion; what do you think he has been saying?"

"Oh, I guess, Lady Anna.

'Will ye gang to the bourne, Marion,
Will ye gang to the bourne with me?'

I can't continue the song, for my father beckons, but fare you well." Miss Wycherly kissed her hand playfully, and walked gaily up the room, which was thinning very fast.

"That was excellently done," observed Lady Ennismore to Julia, as they proceeded to the carriage, "but it will cost your friend her night's rest, and her lover into the bargain. That fragment of song, and the careless manner which accompanied its delivery, will throw the gentleman into Lady Anna's power."

Anna Maria was escorted to the carriage by Tom Pynsent, and Lady Wetheral triumphantly and delightedly invited him to Wetheral, whenever he felt inclined to do them honour by his presence.

"Certainly, Mr. Pynsent, Lady Spottiswoode's parties bear away the bell amongst us; every thing is so agreeably arranged, so many extremely pleasant people gathered together! Wetheral will prove fast-days after such an evening as this,

but fasts are enjoined, you know. Mortifications are proper to subdue the spirit."

"I am engaged to ride with Miss Wetheral to-morrow," replied Tom Pynsent, with a slight hesitation of speech, and a remarkably silly look. "I am to show her a monstrous fine view."

"How very kind! my daughter is not acquainted with our *distant* views, Mr. Pynsent, and your polite attention will be the means of increasing her pleasures. Miss Wetheral delights in fine scenery. You must dine with us, my dear sir; we shall not allow you to run away after, perhaps, a long and fatiguing ride. My dear Lord Ennismore, thank you for bringing me Julia, but where is her ladyship?"

"Lord Farnborough is escorting my mother; our carriage has just drawn up, and she begs you will drive on without waiting for her. She is talking to the Farnboroughs, and I am going to join her. We shall be at Wetheral before you."

"Oh yes, your horses are much too speedy for *my* fears. Well, then, my dear Julia, we will proceed at once into the carriage."

Lord Ennismore handed Julia to the carriage, and returned to join his mother.

"Excellent young man," exclaimed Lady

Wetheral, "I always admired Ennismore, but his filial attentions are beautiful."

Tom Pynsent could not forbear a smile at her ladyship's enthusiastic admiration; he wished the party good night.

"Good night, good night," said Lady Wetheral and Julia, kissing their hands to the receding figure of Mr. Pynsent. Anna Maria did not speak her adieus, neither did she wave her hand, but she bent forward to watch the last glimpse of his athletic form, as it disappeared among the groups, who were waiting for their carriages.

CHAPTER VII.

Tom Pynsent's ride with Miss Wetheral only led the way to repeated engagements at Wetheral on his part, and on Lady Wetheral's side, to affectionate welcomes and smiles upon his entrance. At every opportunity, and upon every occasion, Tom Pynsent was appointed to take charge of "dear Anna Maria," and her ladyship thanked him in flattering terms for the delightful accession of health which Miss Wetheral had gained by constant and agreeable horse-exercise.

Anna Maria did, indeed, gain both health and happiness from the repeated *tête-à-têtes* which fell to her lot with the man she loved. The tone of conversation, his shy manner — so like his manner with Julia—his anxiety to form fresh engagements to meet again; all convinced her his affections were surrendered to herself. Her

cheek resumed its bloom, her eye regained its brightness, and her figure became more elastic; there was hope in her smiles, and lightness in her movements, which formed an extraordinary change in the once insipid Miss Wetheral. Anna Maria must ever appear gentle and peculiarly feminine, but she was no longer painfully inert or tranquil, to a death-like stillness. It was a rapid and complete change; a change which proved how powerfully unrequited love had dealt with a heart which could now rise at the touch of affection, from torpid listlessness, to the joys of life; which could spring at once from cold and weary melancholy, to the light and warmth of a joyous mind, revelling in happy prospects.

Sir John Wetheral perceived Tom Pynsent's attentions with pleasure. His honest heart and honourable feelings promised every happiness, he said, to a woman who could prefer heart to head, and, if Anna Maria had the sense to choose him instead of the lordlings whom Julia coveted, he could insure her a happy married life, if it were not her own fault. He wished he could prophecy equal content to Julia, but she had planned her own marriage, and she must abide the issue; Lady Wetheral must blame herself, if Julia was

unhappy, for she had brought up her daughters to consider wealth and station a balance to the weight of matrimonial misery, and her remarks and sentiments taught Julia to believe she had done well in selling herself to the highest bidder.

Lady Wetheral never could endure her husband's observations, when they touched upon her government of children, and his present remarks brought down a thousand reproaches.

"I think, Sir John, you might spare me what I can only term abuse, and which you level at me now upon all occasions."

"My dear, you are wrong; abuse never issues from my lips."

"I call that abuse," she returned, "which throws blame over all my actions, and which is not true. You are imputing, I may say, infamous motives to me; and, while I am ever ready to advance my daughter's happy and respectable establishments, you thunder blame from your study, yet never assist yourself in a work of so much importance. Had it not been for me, Lord Ennismore would never have proposed to Julia, and, had I not watched Tom Pynsent, and drawn him constantly to Wetheral, he might never have transferred his affections to

Anna Maria. In all this, Sir John, you have never assisted me; and what your conscience will accuse you of on your death-bed, I know not; mine will give me consolation in my last hour, in thinking I have performed my duties to my children. You are obstinately resolved to imagine Julia is marrying against her better judgment; but, my love, your time and mine is gone by, and we must not judge of a young woman's affection by our own feelings. I can quite understand Julia's attachment to Lord Ennismore, and she could not be expected to forego that attachment, to please your fastidious taste."

"This is not a matter of taste," replied Sir John; "it involves a deep principle. Julia is marrying Ennismore, because his title has blinded her judgment; her ambition is gratified, and her affections are yielded up to its influence. Your sentiments have fostered her conduct, and you will suffer by its effects, Gertrude."

"Sir John, any one would think you a professed booby," exclaimed his lady, warmly; "any one would suppose you mad to hear you croaking and grieving, because your daughter is

on the point of marriage with a peer of large fortune, and excellent character."

"Ennismore has no character at all, Gertrude."

"Then Julia will govern him, Sir John; don't be uneasy about that."

"Not while his mother lives."

"Nonsense; Julia will do what she pleases; don't talk to me of old mothers; who ever minds their mothers? If Tom Pynsent cared for his mother, he would not pay attention to Anna Maria. No, no, that is a very poor plea against Lord Ennismore. If Tom Pynsent would propose at once, my girls might marry the same day; he intends to propose, of course, but he is a long time about it. He was quicker in asking Julia."

"He has learned experience," said her husband, smiling.

"Men are so stupid," returned Lady Wetheral; "they show their intentions, and yet linger at the threshold. I will find out his meaning the next time we meet, but I shall enter upon the subject with great tact—you need not look so alarmed."

"Remember the fate of Mrs. Primrose's attack upon Mr. Thornhill, Gertrude."

Lady Wetheral affected not to hear when any subject offended or interfered with her ideas of propriety; in this case, she was absolutely deaf, and her thoughts took a more excursive range.

"When my two daughters are disposed of, Clara will, of course, come forward, and her remarkable style of beauty will soon attract attention and admiration. I do not consider Clara particularly gifted, but her appearance will more than balance her want of intellect. Your pet, Chrystal, as you call her, will be a sort of companion for her, though the child is disgustingly forward and pert, as I always prognosticated she would be."

Christobelle was seated upon a stool at her father's feet, when this dialogue took place; he patted her head at the conclusion of Lady Wetheral's speech, and observed how companionable she had been, and still proved to be, in his solitude. "If," he remarked, "the other girls had been brought up to study, instead of being married from the nursery, they would prove better companions and better wives, in the duties they are resolved to encounter."

"That is a remark so like you, my dear, that I am somewhat weary of the dull round of sentiment; Miss Chrystal, what are you poring over?"

Christobelle rose, and presented her book.

"Ah, very well; Miss Edgeworth is very clever with her chemistry, and that prattling Rosamond, but she never married, and never will marry. I never allowed my girls to read these kind of books, to make them careless about their appearance, and disagreeably learned to men. I never found a clever woman anxious to please, and in general they do some extraordinary thing or other, like Miss Wycherly, who is clever, but she drives herself about in a very masculine manner. There, my dear, take back your book; if you turn out a reading lady, you will be an object of dislike, and men will shun you; but, pray remember, you belong to your father; *I* have no hand in your education."

"Chrystal will be a treasure to the man who wins her," said Sir John.

"Yes, yes, she will do for Leslie, or be a treasure to that dirty antiquarian, Cromleholm's son, Philip; but I wish to ask your opinion; must we really have Mrs. Pynsent at Julia's wedding?"

"How can you avoid it, Gertrude?"

"I wish I knew some method of avoiding the invitation, without giving offence."

"How so? You have formed an intimacy with her, and professed to esteem her."

"That's another thing. One esteems people for different reasons, and esteem means nothing. I always kept up an intimacy for the girls' sakes, but I cannot endure her very abrupt manners. She is very offensive."

"My dear Gertrude, you must manage your own affairs: you formed the intimacy, to my great astonishment."

"I never receive assistance from you, Sir John. Never mind how or why I formed the intimacy; it is sufficient that I wish to escape her society at Julia's wedding; can I manage it?"

"I think not."

"I must then endure her. I see Mr. Pynsent, Tom I mean, riding up the park; I must seek Anna Maria." Lady Wetheral hastily quitted the apartment.

Tom Pynsent arrived, and was ushered into the sitting-room, where Lady Wetheral was seated alone; she was apparently startled by his entrance.

"My dear Mr. Pynsent, there is an old saying, and not a very refined one, which has been exemplified in myself at this moment. I was thinking of you, and wishing to see you, as you entered."

"I am much obliged, Lady Wetheral; I am sure I am very much honoured by your thoughts; but where are the ladies?"

"Lady Ennismore has *chaperoned* some of the party in a drive to Shrewsbury. Lewis's shop has so many attractions for young people!"

"Is Miss Wetheral gone?" asked Tom Pynsent, in a tone of disappointment. "I want a hat, and I'll take this opportunity of riding to Shrewsbury. Any thing I can do for you, Lady Wetheral?"

"I have given Julia a commission, thank you. Anna Maria did not join the party. She is not very well this morning."

Tom Pynsent had risen to depart; he now reseated himself.

"Oh, if you have no commission to give me, I shall not ride so far; I can get a hat any time. I hope Miss Wetheral is not confined to her room."

"My daughter is not well, Mr. Pynsent.

She looks much, very much improved by her exercise on horseback, and I am complimented upon her brilliant complexion and spirits, but I am not easy about her. I hope her fine complexion betrays no seeds of consumption; her spirits are not the spirits of health, I much fear."

"Good God! you don't think so!" cried Tom Pynsent, in alarm. "I thought Miss Wetheral never looked better than she has done for some weeks past."

Lady Wetheral shook her head.

"There is something not quite right, and I was wishing to see you, to observe that perhaps riding-exercise was too violent for her constitution. I think I must advise her to drive out in the phaeton, and try its effect; but many thanks are due to you, my dear Mr. Pynsent, for your kind and regular attendance upon my daughter. I have often heard her express much gratitude towards you."

"I shall be very happy, I am sure, to drive Miss Wetheral in any open carriage," remarked Tom, perfectly obtuse to the aim and end of his companion's purpose. "I can drive her to very many pleasant views."

"I thank you most sincerely for your more than kind politeness towards my daughter, which we all appreciate; but, my dear Mr. Pynsent, we must not draw down unnecessary observation; people are always inclined to remark upon —I think I must decline your agreeable offer, though with pain—I——."

"Well, and what can any one say if I drive out Miss Wetheral? There is no harm in attending an invalid in a drive, is there?"

Lady Wetheral laughed and coughed a little.

"No, Mr. Pynsent; no harm, though you have represented it so humorously; but remarks will be made, and are made. As a mother I feel those remarks, and I particularly beg you to understand, that it is quite against my own ideas of right—quite in opposition to my own feelings, that I am painfully called upon to withdraw my daughter from being publicly seen so frequently in your company, attended only by her servant."

Tom Pynsent twirled his hat, and was silent. Her ladyship proceeded.

"If the world, Mr. Pynsent, would only allow us to be happy our own way, how many agreeable hours might be enjoyed which are now de-

nied us! Perhaps, as a mother, I *was* wrong in throwing my daughter so much in the society of a very agreeable man—the world says so; but I have the strongest dependence upon the discretion and dignity of all my daughters, therefore I have no fears: however, something is due to public opinion, and to that severe mentor, attribute the necessity of this painful task. I hope I have not given offence by my sincerity, Mr. Pynsent?"

Tom Pynsent was taken by surprise; his agreeable rides were ended, and his attendance upon Anna Maria at once suspended by the breath of public opinion. There was but one way of recovering his former position at Wetheral, and Lady Wetheral had won the day!

"I think it very extraordinary that I am not to ride with a lady I like. Do you think, Lady Wetheral, a man is to be blamed if a lady refuses him, and he should like to propose to another?"

"I should consider a gentleman very weak who pined for a woman's indifferent heart, Mr. Pynsent," replied her ladyship, turning away to conceal the triumphant expression of her countenance.

"I am glad you are of my opinion, Lady Wetheral. I was very sorry Miss Julia refused me, for I thought her a very nice girl, and I was extremely attached to her; but I saw she did not care about me. Miss Wetheral is always kind-hearted and polite, and I don't think she dislikes me. I am sure I don't know, but if I thought she cared for me, I should like, like very much to—I should like to see Miss Wetheral, if you please. Do you think, Lady Wetheral, she would let me see her?" Tom Pynsent became extremely red-faced.

"She would see *you*, I am sure, Mr. Pynsent. Anna Maria said particularly this morning, 'If Mr. Pynsent calls, I shall see him, but no other gentleman.' I will ring, and let her know you are here."

There was silence for some minutes; at length her Ladyship rose.

"I make no apology for leaving you a short time alone, Mr. Pynsent. My daughter will soon take my place, and we shall consider you our guest for the day. I make no stranger of you. I must attend an appointment with our bailiff, and their complaints are without end. Sir John often makes Roberts over to me. Do not let me find you flown upon my return."

"I hope I shall not have occasion to depart, Lady Wetheral," said Tom Pynsent, struggling for composure.

"I will allow no departure, Mr. Pynsent. Anna Maria must detain you prisoner till Roberts allows me to escape. Mind, I lay my commands upon you to remain at Wetheral."

Lady Wetheral had scarcely closed the door upon her own exit, when Anna Maria entered at the opposite end of the room, blooming and happy; her eyes sparkled with pleasure, as they rested upon Tom Pynsent.

"I only heard of your arrival this instant," she said, as they shook hands; "you have not been here alone long, I hope."

Tom Pynsent placed a chair for the young lady, and seated himself near her, but for some moments he did not speak. Miss Wetheral looked at him with surprise. Tom Pynsent at length broke the awkward pause.

"I am sorry you are ill, Miss Wetheral."

"I never was better in my life, Mr. Pynsent," replied Anna Maria, smiling. "What makes you suppose I am ill?"

"I thought you looked very well, Miss Wetheral, but I was told you were poorly, and

I am sure you look as little like a consumptive person as any one I ever saw!"

"Who could invent such a fable?" inquired Anna Maria.

"I have heard something worse than that," continued Tom, hesitating, and walking to the window.

"Good heavens! about me! or any unpleasant news from Hatton?"

"Lady Wetheral says we are not to ride again together. I think it a very extraordinary thing, don't you?" Tom Pynsent looked at the distant Wrekin to appear unconcerned. He received no reply from Anna Maria.

"I think it a monstrous folly to deny one those kind of things," proceeded Tom, turning towards his companion, who sat gazing at him, pale as her own muslin dress. He was shocked at her appearance, and, forgetting his shyness in affectionate solicitude, he took both her hands in his.

"Miss Wetheral, do you mind it as much as I do? Just tell me if you mind it as I do?"

Anna Maria could only answer in alarm, and almost involuntarily "Yes."

Tom Pynsent could not command his feelings;

he caught her in his arms, and saluted her with a kiss, which might have been distinctly heard in the hall.

"I like a girl who speaks her mind without affectation and nonsense, and there's a good foxhunting kiss from your husband, if you will make me so, and we will ride together in spite of the devil."

Miss Wetheral's astonishment at the action, and her happiness at her lover's subsequent speech, prevented all reply; but she gave him her hand at once, though her face was covered with blushes. Tom Pynsent squeezed the little white hand with rapture, and her open dealing made a taciturn lover garrulous with approval.

"You *do* let me squeeze your hand, and you do *not* pretend to be offended because a man tells you he loves you! Who would have thought you were such an open-hearted, dear creature, without a bit of nonsense? Now, give me your other hand—there's a dear, beautiful girl as you are, and we may ride now to the world's end together. Perhaps, when we are married, you will ride with me to see the hounds throw off. I shall only hunt then three times a week. Lady Wetheral frightened me properly, when

she forbid my riding with you; however, I shall stay here to-day, and we can talk over things. You will walk with me, my dear girl, won't you?"

"I am in a labyrinth, I really am bewildered, Mr. Pynsent," replied Miss Wetheral, timidly. "Do not fancy me silly, but I really am bewildered, and hardly know what to say."

"You have said enough, quite enough," cried Tom Pynsent, squeezing her poor hands into his enormous palms. "You have accepted me, and I shan't allow you to leave me; I shall follow you like a dog till we are married: a little walk will be the very thing to refresh you. Let us walk in the park, and look at the Wrekin, and talk of our wedding-day."

Miss Wetheral mechanically obeyed her lover's request; and they were deeply absorbed in conversation, pacing up and down the avenue, when the party drove home from Shrewsbury.

"Mrs. Primrose has succeeded tolerably well, Sir John," observed Lady Wetheral, in the interim between Tom Pynsent's departure and the lighting of the chamber-candles—"Mrs. Primrose has caught Mr. Thornhill, in despite of your alarms." This was whispered to reach Sir John's ear only.

Lady Ennismore had something very obliging to say, and whenever she spoke, her flattering compliments soothed the ear of her object—she only framed sentences of compliment.

"My dear Miss Wetheral, a certain gentleman's gallant and unequivocal admiration of a nameless beauty, proves his excellent discriminating powers. I admire the lover, and approve his suit. I wish I had a daughter who was fortunate enough to attract Mr. Pynsent."

Anna Maria did not love Lady Ennismore; she even shrank from her address in general; yet her expressed approval of Tom Pynsent at once gained belief, and gave pleasure to her heart. On all sides, congratulations awaited her. Her father added his approval, and it was given with feeling and earnestness. Before all the assembled family-party, he told her he had no fears for her welfare, as the wife of an honest, high-principled man. He could congratulate her upon an engagement which must bring happiness to a woman who valued the texture of a heart such as Pynsent possessed. His wealth might surround her person with luxuries, but his good qualities alone could secure her peace of mind. He trusted Anna Maria would appre-

ciate and hold fast the affections of her future husband, and her lot would fall upon good ground. Pynsent was a man to whom he could intrust a daughter's happiness, and have no fears for her futurity.

Anna Maria's spirits were subdued under her father's earnest observations; her happiness, the suddenness of the event, and her future prospects, combined with the congratulations of her family, overpowered a mind which had long borne the alternations of hope, suspense, and fear. She sought refuge in her own room; Lady Wetheral and Julia followed; the one to offer soothing remedies, and to rejoice with her sister in the termination of her sorrow; the other to triumph in the success of her scheme: her ladyship's delight was boundless. To marry two daughters in one day to the first matches in Shropshire and Staffordshire, seemed an affair beyond common calculation: the lottery of life rarely threw two prizes consecutively into a family; and certainly her own generalship had secured both. In the exuberance of her spirits, she confessed to the sisters the ruse she had practised to elicit an offer from Tom Pynsent. Anna Maria was distressed.

"Oh, mamma, how could you take such a method; practising upon Tom's fears to hasten a declaration! How you frighten me; I might have lost him!"

"Poor Greenhorn! no, you had no chance of losing him; he was too much in love. I only prepared the way for him, to hasten the catastrophe. I particularly wished him to propose, because my mind is bent upon the double wedding, therefore I applied the goad very gently, but he answered the whip. The instant I mentioned your rides being discontinued, I saw the thing was done. My only hope now is, that Clara may succeed as you have done. There will be some difficulty in obtaining Mrs. Pynsent's consent perhaps, but I do not doubt a little management may succeed *there* to. Mrs. Pynsent is violent, but seldom firm; she will chafe and use very strong language, but she will be busy and delighted at your wedding, my love."

"But why do you consider Mrs. Pynsent objects, mamma?" asked Anna Maria, in alarm.

"Oh, she has some stupid notion that I have laid plans for her son, I fancy. Now, to suppose that I hunt for sons-in-law is absolute ab-

surdity. I wish my children to marry well, I confess, but no one detests fortune-hunting more than I do. I consider a manœuvring mother a nuisance in society, and, therefore, Mrs. Pynsent's notion is ridiculous—too ridiculous even to confute. I shall get your father to make an intimate acquaintance with Sir Foster Kerrison, Julia. He is a widower, but his eleven children would not interfere with Clara's comforts: some may die, and the others might be sent to school. I don't believe a word about his kicking his servants; if scandalous reports were believed, very few of us could escape infamy. Servants are vile creatures, and would destroy *any* character. Sir Foster is a very fine man, and not to be rejected because he may occasionally lose his temper. There are many provocations in life, which now and then cause a man's temper to ferment a little, but what would that signify to Clara? Tom Pynsent uses a few, perhaps, unnecessary oaths, but he means nothing; his temper is excellent: Sir Foster probably means no more. I shall ask his eldest daughter to Wetheral, when you are all gone; indeed, I shall require amusement; my spirits will be depressed enough when that melancholy day arrives, my dear girls."

Lady Wetheral's voice fell, and a deep sigh succeeded: she soon resumed, more gaily—

"I shall consider that day a proud and happy one, which allows me to give you to two of the best of men, after all, my loves. It will be my glory to see you united to men standing high in situation, excellent in conduct, possessing the means of showering luxuries upon you, and placing you at the head of magnificent establishments. Should Clara form an equally wealthy connexion, I should die in peace; but I can only consider Sir Foster Kerrison worthy to be related to you. If he has eleven children, he has immense estates in three counties, and I must manage to get Miss Kerrison to Wetheral. I should fear nothing, if Clara would only keep her temper; but I dread the daughter carrying tales back to Ripley: however, I will manage as well as I can, for something must be effected on my side. Good night, my dear girls; I hope you will have sons, and no daughters, for you cannot know a mother's anxiety about daughters — they depend so entirely upon forming proper establishments. Your poor father would never have interested himself about you. I do believe he would be perfectly satisfied if he

considered you destined to live hereafter as spinsters, huddled together in a lodging in Shrewsbury. Be well, Anna Maria; and, in future, you know I have no business to interfere with your rides and drives."

Her ladyship quitted the room, smiling complacently at the remembrance of her successful ruse; and the sisters were left together, to rejoice in and compare their happy prospects.

Lady Wetheral's idea of Mrs. Pynsent's objection, and her short-lived but violent wrath, was exemplified in her conduct, when her son stated his engagement to Miss Wetheral, before his parents, the morning subsequent to his proposal.

"Now hang me, Tom, if I would have believed such a thing from any body's lips but your own. So you have taken a bird out of the Wetheral nest, have you? You have been hunted down, neatly, Master Tom."

"In this particular," replied her son, "I have made my own choice, and my father made no objection when—"

"Who minds your father?" interrupted Mrs. Pynsent; "he never knows what he is about. He says 'yes' to every thing, and looks like a

booby besides. Now you may marry the girl, and take Hatton if you please, but I'll be hanged if *I* notice her! I'm serious, Master Tom."

Tom Pynsent allowed the storm to spend its fury, and Mrs. Pynsent proceeded with increased ire.

"To be gulled into marriage by that woman, Wetheral, drives me wild; but I never saw the man yet, who was not tricked into a trap by an artful woman, in spite of his teeth. Hang the whole set of them, and you too, for being a greater simpleton than your father!"

"If I was a simpleton," observed Mr. Pynsent, quietly, "it was in marrying a masculine lady."

"You be hanged, Bobby! you proposed to every girl you met. I was your fiftieth love, and you knew Sally Hancock and myself loved things out of the common way. I tell you what, Bobby—if Tom marries a Wetheral, you and I leave Shropshire. I won't stay in the country. If I meet her, I'll drive over her, Tom."

Tom Pynsent understood his mother's disposition, and acted accordingly. He assured her of his sorrow in perceiving her dislike to the

match; but, whatever disgust she might feel towards Lady Wetheral's conduct, the daughter was not involved in its folly. "When," continued he, "I proposed to Julia Wetheral, *she* refused me at once."

"You proposed to another of them!" cried Mrs. Pynsent, "and Bill Wycherly was right! You got huffed by one Wetheral, and then turned to another! Is this a true bill? Then I only just ask you, if simpleton is not too gentle an expression, Master Tommy, for such a poor thing as yourself? I only just ask you, if you don't think you are as nice an owl as ever was taken in by a set of manœuvring women? You'll hear enough of this, Tommy Pynsent! You and my Lord Ennismore are a couple of tight boys to be gulled by my lady. Here, make way for me—that I may go and tell my sister Hancock what a nice lad Master Pynsent has turned out. Never expect me to go near Wetheral, Bobby. I would sooner visit old Nick."

Mrs. Pynsent flung out of the room, with an air of offended majesty.

"Let your mother alone, Tom," said Mr. Pynsent, as the door closed upon his indignant lady. "Let her alone, and she won't long refuse

her consent. When she has unburthened her mind to Sally Hancock, and fizzed a little, all will be right again."

Mrs. Pynsent ordered her pony-carriage, and drove off to Lea Cottage, where her widowed sister resided upon a very small income. Mrs. Hancock was darning stockings, when her sister appeared before her with inflamed features.

"Hollo, Pen, what's the matter now?" cried Mrs. Hancock, calmly continuing her darn.—"What's in the wind, now, Pen?"

"I am in a pretty mess, Sally Hancock; what do you think Tom is about to do?"

"Is he going to marry our niece, Wycherly? Don't let him marry a cousin, Pen; bless you, don't let him marry a cousin."

"Marry a *cousin*, Sally! I wish it was no worse than marrying young Pen. He is going to bring me one of Lady Wetheral's dolls, and I have vowed not to see or speak to her."

"Hoot toot, you will think better of it," replied Mrs. Hancock, passing a stocking to her sister. "Do mend that for me—there's a hole in the heel, as big as my thumb. What's the matter with the Wetherals, Pen? They are very fine girls, and very well born."

"It is not *that*," returned Mrs. Pynsent, threading a needle, and taking up the proffered stocking. "If you knew the pains my lady took to hunt down Tom, you would bless yourself, Sally Hancock."

"Never mind, Pen. Didn't our mother do just the same by us? Didn't I marry Hancock, in spite of every thing people could say?—and didn't you declare you would have Bob Pynsent, though he was engaged to Patty Durham?"

"Sally Hancock, do you remember the Shrewsbury races?" cried Mrs. Pynsent, overpowered with laughing at some bygone recollections.

"When we dressed up to frighten Hancock and Pynsent? ay, don't I?" exclaimed her sister, equally amused. "Do you remember Hancock's face, when you told him his fortune?"

"And do you remember Pynsent saying—"

Mrs. Pynsent could no more. A thousand images of the past crowded before her vision, and both ladies laughed immoderately at certain remembrances conjured up by Mrs. Hancock, reverting to youthful indiscretions. Mrs. Pynsent's anger towards her son already waned, as she dwelt upon topics so consonant to her feel-

ings, with her sister. The *tête-à-tête* lasted a considerable time, and the peals of laughter continued, till the completion of the stocking gave warning it was time to part. Mrs. Pynsent prepared to move with reluctance.

"Can't you stay now you are here?" said Mrs. Hancock.

"Don't ask me, Sally Hancock. I must get back to Hatton. If you and Hancock had not spent your property in eating and drinking, you would not have been shut up here with that dreadful foot, which must be your death."

Mrs. Hancock exhibited her swelled foot.—"Yes, that's a neat article, Pen. I wish I could have it sawed off by the carpenter. Can't help it."

"Well, Sally Hancock, if Tom marries, you must come to the wedding;" remarked Mrs. Pynsent, in a doleful voice.

"My dear, how can I come with this foot? A pretty trinket, isn't it, to present before a bride?—There's a neat foot to trip among the bridesmaids to the altar!—I'm only fit for Lea, Pen, but you can tell me all about it."

Mrs. Pynsent drew up her face and eyes into a comic expression of astonishment, as she con-

templated her sister's foot, veiled from the public gaze in the recess of a large list shoe.

"Well, Sally Hancock, you gave a good price for it. There's a hundred thousand pounds' worth in that hovel of a shoe. Every farthing melted into your stomachs. It was sure to tell upon you, some day."

"We can't eat our cake and have it," observed the jolly Mrs. Hancock; "but it wasn't *all* spent in eating and drinking. Hancock and myself lost more than half at play. It didn't all go in eating and drinking, Pen. Poor Hancock was very violent when I was unlucky, but he thought nothing about his own losses."

"You would have him, Sally Hancock."

"Well, I was as resolute as yourself in the matter of Bob Pynsent, Pen; but all the Wycherlys were a rum set — must, and would have their own way. Give Tom credit for a slice of the family disorder, and pocket the affront."

"How my lady will hector, and compliment, and courtesy!" shuddered Mrs. Pynsent.

"Never mind my lady! When is it to take place?"

"Oh, I don't know; I was in such a fury, I asked no questions."

"Tell Tom I will congratulate him, if he will come and see me." Mrs. Hancock winked her eye.

"Tom never will come near you till you leave off your broad jokes, Sally Hancock. I wish you would not offend people in that way. I can't ask you among ladies and gentlemen."

"Lord, Pen, how can I leave off old habits at my time of life?" Mrs. Hancock put her finger to her eye and looked innocent.

"Then Bobby and Tom will never visit you, or allow me to ask you to Hatton for more than one day. That's all you get by old habits, Sally Hancock."

"Tom is mighty nice; I wouldn't give a farthing for such a nephew."

"I'll trouble you not to abuse Tom, Sally Hancock," cried her sister, who was touched on a most sensitive point by this remark. "Tom is always right, and his mother will always uphold him. You must have a very genteel dialect, when two gentlemen cannot sit in your society comfortably."

"When shall I see you again? don't be scolding, Pen; I'm not used to scolding, now poor Hancock is gone."

"I'll come to Lea, as soon as Tom's affairs

are settled, but never call Tom names before me, Sally Hancock; you know I cannot bear it. Tom shall marry too if he pleases, and no one shall offer an opinion against the match before *me*."

"Nor before me either," cried Mrs. Hancock.

"Before *you!* who ever comes before you, except myself?" asked Mrs. Pynsent, stopping short, as they were advancing towards the door, at which the pony-carriage was drawn up.

"Oh! Tomkins, the exciseman, comes for a bit of chat, and the old Ripley housekeeper has retired here, so I often hear the news. This is a very cheerful place."

"Don't frighten away the exciseman, Sally Hancock."

"Never fear, Pen; the exciseman is not made of such dainty materials as my nephew."

So ended the interview between the sisters; and Mrs. Pynsent returned to Hatton, resolved internally to support her son's wishes, and to offend any person who presumed to reflect upon his taking a "Wetheral."

CHAPTER VIII.

News of any trifling occurrence passes rapidly round a neighbourhood; but news of bridal import speeds with increased velocity through every department. It was soon known to every individual in the establishment, that Mr. Pynsent was accepted by Miss Wetheral, and in less than twenty-four hours the event was generally current in the higher circles of the Wetheral acquaintance. Separated as many mansions were from each other's observation by large intermediate property, it was wonderful how the intelligence could gain such powerful progress, yet it was publicly spoken of as an assured fact the following evening at Lady Spottiswoode's; and Lady Wetheral's extraordinary good fortune was canvassed in every particular.

Mrs. Pynsent's publicly-expressed disapprobation of a daughter-in-law from Wetheral, was commented upon with eagerness, and many

anxious friends of both parties looked with mingled curiosity and amusement to the effects likely to emanate from Hatton. Miss Wycherly consented to escort a party upon a congratulatory mission to her aunt Pynsent, and she undertook to drive Lady Spottiswoode and her daughter to Hatton, accompanied by the two Mr. Tyndals.

It was an evil day to Miss Wycherly. Ever since the eventful ball, which produced the present cause of her intended visit, Mr. Spottiswoode had never renewed the subject which she had treated so lightly, or sought her society, his once constant anxiety and invariable daily practice. Since that eventful ball, so happy in its results to one party, so gloomy in its termination to herself —since that night, when her rash spirits tempted her to jest with her lover's serious wish to understand her sentiments, had Mr. Spottiswoode been a stranger to Lidham; and most rashly had Miss Wycherly persevered in flirting with Mr. Henry Tyndal, to evince her indifference to Mr. Spottiswoode's prolonged absence, and to bring down upon herself, ultimately, the reproach of having given encouragement to Henry Tyndal ungenerously and dishonourably. Her present state of mind towards Mr. Spottiswoode was un-

changeable affection, such as it had ever felt towards him; and such as she felt assured must ever exist there, though her own lips had made a breach between them, by trifling with his long-expressed affection.

Miss Wycherly felt aware that she had drawn down upon herself the offended feelings of an injured man, who had borne all her caprice with patient endurance; she felt, too, that there was a point when that endurance must and would burst from its fetters, and assert its freedom. Mr. Spottiswoode's spirit might bear with a certain degree of flippancy; but he would not endure to become a woman's toy, to become a thing, which the woman he loved could dare to throw from her in caprice, and recal at will. Such, Miss Wycherly knew, was not the nature of *his* love, whom her heart pined to recover. But her pride—the pride of a woman unwilling to bend her spirit in acknowledgment of error—persisted in allowing Henry Tyndal to attend her in public; and its false reasoning forbade her to appear wounded by the consequences of her fault. Miss Wycherly could only trust to circumstances for assistance in developing the real intentions of her offended lover; and, in making an appointment with Lady Spottiswoode,

she trusted events might concur to restore her again into her son's favour, and dispel the cloud which separated them.

In this frame of mind, and with this hope, to spread flowers on her path, Miss Wycherly drove her four beautiful bays into Shrewsbury, and drew up before Lady Spottiswoode's house. Mr. Spottiswoode, accompanied by the Tyndals, appeared at the hall-door to receive her; and Mr. Spottiswoode politely, but with reserve of voice and manner, expressed Lady Spottiswoode's hope that she would take refreshment before they proceeded to Hatton. This was Miss Wycherly's first meeting with her lover, since the misunderstanding which had taken place at Lady Spottiswoode's ball; and her heart felt and sunk under the changed expression of his voice and manner. She gave her reins to the groom, and prepared to obey Lady Spottiswoode's request. Mr. Henry Tyndal went forward with his brother to offer their assistance, while Mr. Spottiswoode remained on the steps, as a person who conceived that all required attention on his part, was effected in the delivery of his mother's message. Miss Wycherly declined Mr. Henry Tyndal's offered hand, and reseated herself with feelings of mingled mortification and indignation.

Nothing now could persuade her to descend from the barouche-box.

"Have the goodness, Mr. Tyndal, to make my excuses to Lady Spottiswoode. I rarely quit my throne, when once exalted, and she will allow of my apology. Insist upon herself and Miss Spottiswoode taking their own time. I am not in any hurry."

It appeared as though Mr. Spottiswoode had cheerfully and for ever surrendered her to Mr. Tyndal's attentions, for he spoke in an undertone to the young men, and returned into the house.

"Very kind fellow," cried Henry Tyndal; "he has gone himself with your message, so I can stay and admire your set out, and yourself. Upon my soul, your habit sits beautifully, doesn't it, John?"

"I begged *you* to deliver my message," replied Miss Wycherly, offended and distressed at her lover's action. "I desired *you*, Mr. Tyndal, to deliver my message, not Mr. Spottiswoode."

Henry Tyndal misunderstood, and was flattered by Miss Wycherly's reproof. It was clear enough to his comprehension she was angry with Spottiswoode for presuming to take a mes-

sage which had been delegated to himself as her regular and encouraged attendant.

"Oh, well! never mind for once, Miss Wycherly; I thought Spottiswoode was very anxious to go, or he should not have taken my place, I promise you. No, no, poor fellow! he was off before I knew what he was about. Upon my soul, your horses are magnificent."

Miss Wycherly did not hear Mr. Tyndal's observation; her attention was given exclusively and painfully to the hall-door, which remained open.

Lady Spottiswoode and her daughter appeared.

"My dear Miss Wycherly, you are patience itself," exclaimed both ladies.

"I never descend from my altitude," replied Miss Wycherly; "but you look forsaken without a beau of some sort; if your son would like to take a seat, Lady Spottiswoode, there is one to spare."

"Charles said he meant to call at Hatton," said Miss Spottiswoode, "and I dare say it would really be an accommodation, unless this is the day he promised to ride over to the Farnboroughs. Mr. Tyndal, before you mount your horse, just tell Charles here is room for him, by

Miss Wycherly's permission — beg pardon for the trouble."

Mr. Henry Tyndal sprang from his horse, and proceeded to obey her request. Miss Wycherly gathered up the reins, but her hands trembled with anxious curiosity to ascertain the effect of the summons. Mr Henry Tyndal returned alone.

"Spottiswoode says he is going to Hatton, but he is engaged to ride there with the Farnborough party. It has been an appointment of some days' standing, he says, therefore he cannot come; here he is to answer for himself."

Mr. Charles Spottiswoode appeared equipped for riding, but he excused himself to Miss Wycherly with much politeness—a style of manner so wounding to its object, so unbearably irritating to a self-upbraiding, yet proud, spirit. The colour rose in Miss Wycherly's face.

"I am engaged to ride to Hatton with Lord Farnborough and his daughter," proceeded Mr. Spottiswoode: "Lady Anna commanded me to attend her some time ago, and her ladyship never fails her word, therefore I must not allow her to upbraid me with the most offensive of all failings, that of deceiving expectations. Sophy, you are all the colours of the rainbow."

"Never mind, Charles," replied Miss Spottiswoode, smiling good-naturedly at the remark; "if I mix pink and green too strongly for your taste, pray remonstrate with Lady Anna Herbert; she wears *three* colours; perhaps your opinion may have some weight with her. I am, you know, incorrigible."

"Will Lady Anna possess more sense than her sex?" asked Mr. Spottiswoode. "Will she relinquish three favourite tints to please?"

"To please *you*, Charles, I dare say Lady Anna would renounce her darling colours — purple, yellow, and green. Can my dear pink and green be half so *prononcée*? Miss Wycherly, do speak for me! Charles always upholds Lady Anna's frightful combination."

"I have not upheld Lady Anna, Sophy."

"Yes, you always do, Charles. Every thing is Lady Anna now."

Miss Wycherly's spirit could endure no more; she turned to Lady Spottiswoode.

"We are embarked in this undertaking, and time is precious. If Sophy has settled her interesting topic, may I proceed to Hatton? Mr. Tyndal, Mr. Henry Tyndal, you must not lose sight of us; shall we proceed?"

The lady was perfectly ready to resign the

conversation; the Mr. Tyndals were already mounted, and Mr. Spottiswoode bowed his adieu. Miss Wycherly would not appear mortified and unhappy; she returned her lover's salutation with a bow and smile, which equalled his own in apparent indifference; and the party were quickly on their road. Miss Wycherly, as charioteer, had full occupation for her attention, and she was silent during the drive: her heart was heavy; and the fear of having lost Spottiswoode's affection weighed down her spirits and produced a mortal sorrow. Such was the consequence of a fault persisted in, because a false pride could not endure to own its transgression! Such was the suffering produced by a heart resolute to lose the man beloved, ere it would bend to acknowledge its weakness!

Miss Wycherly forgot, in her own misery, the amusement she contemplated in observing her aunt Pynsent's conduct, when she received the visits of congratulation upon her son's intended marriage. In her misery, also, she did not immediately perceive Tom Pynsent and Miss Wetheral comfortably established in the Hatton drawing-room; or did she, for some moments, perceive the Ennismores and Julia also present; while Mr. Pynsent, smilingly and

in high spirits, was chatting in turn to the individuals composing the circle, and calling for the congratulations of each person upon the event in prospect.

Lady Spottiswoode gazed in astonishment at the sudden and powerful change: who could have surmised that the "empty, horrible Wetherals" were now to receive a thousand attentions and affectionate solicitudes from Mrs. Pynsent! — that "the bird from the Wetheral nest" was to be wooed to its gilded cage by all the gentle lures that Mrs. Pynsent could devise! — that sweet was henceforth to be bitter, and the bitter sweet! Lady Spottiswoode gazed, and gazed again.

"Well, you are all come to say pretty things to me," said Mrs. Pynsent, addressing the newly-arrived party, "and you are all moonstruck! — not a word from one of you: why, Pen, you are all of a heap! — Well, Tyndal lads, what have you to say?—here am I, full of bustle and happiness. Tom is going to get married at last, and he has made his old mother happy. We are all happy. I tell Bobby he ought to fall down and worship Miss Wetheral, for taking Tom—but here, just come this way, Lady Spottiswoode." Mrs. Pynsent lowered her voice.—

"I didn't much like the idea of a Wetheral, once, you remember; but that's all ended—we won't remember old grievances."

"Certainly not," replied her ladyship—"one has often reason to discard opinions."

"To be sure—can't be for ever harping upon one string." She turned to her niece.

"Why, you look as if you had lost your love. What's the matter, woman?—cheer up. Get a good husband, Pen; and don't pay these sort of visits with such a long face!"

Miss Wycherly could not command a portion of the ever-ready spirits which had never failed her before; her mind was too oppressed, even to make an effort. Her aunt's observations were unheard or unnoticed, as she turned towards her cousin Tom, who came up, red-faced and happy, to demand her felicitations.

"All right, at last, Cousin Pen: all fears and tribulations are over. There is nothing like fair dealing, and I have won a wife, after a devilish sharp run, though a short one. Now say something in your own fashion upon it, Cousin Pen; something, as Spottiswoode says of you, sharp, short, and sensible."

Miss Wycherly put her hand to her eyes, and, for a few moments, she made no reply.

Tom Pynsent believed the trembling of her hands proceeded from fatigue.

"I have told you, Cousin Pen, a woman should not drive four-in-hand; it's something out of reason. A pair is very pretty handling; but your little figure perched upon a box, with four horses, won't answer. Your hands are all in a shake, now."

"Let Pen alone, Tom," said Mrs. Pynsent. "My niece is a Wycherly, and the Wycherlys never gave in till they were fairly under ground."

"I am ill, aunt; very ill — a glass of water; any thing just to revive me; my heart is bursting." Miss Wycherly became unable to speak, and the company surrounded her, offering every species of condolence and remedy. A glass of water was procured, and the cold sparkling draught refreshed her. She felt that an effort must be made; and it was made under sickness of heart and prostration of mind, but the effort had a beneficial effect, for it roused the sufferer from a blighting sense of misery to the recollection of present events, and she was enabled to smile and speak to her cousin with some degree of coherence.

"Tom, I do wish you happy, and I suppose I am fatigued, for I have driven fourteen miles, but I never was so ill before."

"You are ill," observed Julia Wetheral, who had seated herself near Miss Wycherly: "it must be something extraordinary which could overpower *you*, Penelope. You must have felt fatigue in mind and body with those gay horses."

Miss Wycherly endeavoured to form a playful reply, but a flood of tears burst forth.

"Say nothing to me, now, Julia — let me be perfectly silent for a quarter of an hour, and I shall recover."

Every one returned to their former seats, except Julia, who remained silently at Miss Wycherly's side, and the company again resumed their interrupted conversation. Mrs. Pynsent had her private thoughts respecting her niece's sudden illness, which she whispered to Lady Ennismore.

"Pen is never ill, and never tired with driving — she would drive six-in-hand, and laugh at it. I hope Pen hasn't taken a fancy to Tom: my sister Hancock never could bear the idea of cousins marrying."

Lady Ennismore smiled graciously.—"You are more acute, Mrs. Pynsent, than myself: you have, no doubt, excellent reasons for your suppositions."

"Lord, I never suppose any thing, Lady

Ennismore, or see any thing till it's all over; only Pen's illness, just now, looks queer. If it was not about Tom, I can't imagine the cause of Pen's bit of a faint, just when she was to congratulate him upon his engagement! I am sure Pen never would faint about a trifle; and, as to her driving, it's all my eye: my brother Bill put her upon the coach-box as soon as she could walk."

"Perhaps it is mental agitation of another kind," softly remarked Lady Ennismore.

"Pooh, pooh!—Pen has no mental agitation, Lady Ennismore. What should ail her to faint about any thing, if it wasn't Tom's marriage? My sister Hancock had always a horror of their marrying, only I thought nothing about it.—How was I to fancy Pen liked Tom, when she was always with Charles Spottiswoode?"

Lady Ennismore appeared politely convinced, by her companion's reasoning, that Miss Wycherly's faintness proceeded from her cousin's insensibility to her attachment, when the door was thrown open to announce Lord Farnborough and Lady Anna Herbert. Miss Wycherly cast an eye of alarm towards the hall. Lord Farnborough stalked majestically forward with his daughter under his arm, and Mr. Spot-

tiswoode followed too surely in their train. She started up—"Julia, I cannot stay here; follow me into the library."

Both ladies disappeared during the little bustle of a fresh reception, and Lady Ennismore alone observed their rapid exit. Miss Wycherly closed the door of the library, to secure themselves from interruption or intrusion; she then took off her hat, and, seating herself at the library-table, she rested her head upon her hands, while the tears flowed copiously down her cheeks. "Julia," she said—"Julia, I cannot endure this; I have lost him, and my heart will break."

Julia sat down opposite her companion, and vainly offered consolation.

"Don't attempt to console me, Julia," sobbed poor Miss Wycherly.

"I am past all consolation. The creature has never visited Lidham since that abominable night at Lady Spottiswoode's, and now he is capering after Lady Anna Herbert. Oh, Julia, if you could comprehend the misery I feel!"

"My dear Penelope, you never confessed your fault to Charles Spottiswoode, I fear, by all this grief. Have you tried to see him, or written to him since your quarrel?"

The Wycherly blood rushed into the very forehead of Penelope. She raised her head and dashed away the tears.

"Who! *I* beg submissively for Spottiswoode's forgiveness! *I* meanly sue for pardon to a man who has been my slave till this Lady Anna has attracted him! *I* tell him to return to Lidham, because I cannot live without him! I'll die ten thousand deaths, before I will sully my lips in imploring pardon!"

"But, Penelope, you are not reduced to implore pardon," replied Julia, in soothing accents. "You are not advised to act in any way degrading to your feelings. Did you not trifle most ungenerously with Mr. Spottiswoode at your last meeting, and have you made one advance since that time, to prove to him you were in jest?"

Miss Wycherly again drooped her head upon her hands, as she replied—"He has given me no opportunity to do so, Julia: he has been ever since that evening devoted to the Farnboroughs."

"And you have been equally devoted to the Tyndals, Penelope. Have you not made Henry Tyndal your shadow?"

"A great spoony!" ejaculated Miss Wycherly.

"Put an end to all this," resumed Julia, "and give Mr. Spottiswoode reason to think you regret your unjust conduct; decline Henry Tyndal's constant attendance, and do not bring upon yourself the Court Herbert reproaches. You are encouraging Henry Tyndal, Penelope, and Mr. Spottiswoode must perceive it."

"I know I have done wrong, Julia, but every thing is gone too far; I cannot, cannot subject myself to Spottiswoode's scorn; he will never forgive me, and I will never bear the indignity of seeking a hopeless reconciliation. If I have suffered Henry Tyndal's attentions, *he* has sought Lady Anna Herbert. No, we are divided for ever!"

The idea of a final separation from her lover's affection, seemed to produce agony of mind too powerful to endure, for, Miss Wycherly, rising suddenly, seized Julia's hands, and gazed earnestly in her face.

"Julia Wetheral, I will act upon your advice, only tell me what to do, if any thing now can restore his heart; I am wretched enough to submit to any thing short of the degradation of seeking a man's extinguished affection! You will not wish me to do a wrong thing, Julia, therefore, think for me, and quiet my heart."

"I *will* tell you what to do, Penelope; return with me into the drawing-room; do not give your attention to Mr. Henry Tyndal, and do not appear so indifferent to a man you have driven from you with unkindness."

"Julia," replied Miss Wycherly, breathing hard, "I cannot bear to see Spottiswoode with another person. I cannot witness his attention to Lady Anna. I will remain here till *they* are gone, or I should die upon the spot. If you could understand my miserable feelings, you would pity me, and my own folly has produced them!"

Miss Wycherly walked about the library in great distress, which pierced her friend's heart to witness. She could only offer her sympathy, and urge her change of manners towards Mr. Tyndal. Grief produces many effects; on some minds the hand of sorrow falls heavily, yet it originates patience and gentleness; in others, it produces irritation and increased violence of temper. It was so with Miss Wycherly, whose spirit chafed at the remembrance of her own folly, and even attacked the prudent counsel of her friend.

"I tell you, Julia, I am ready to spurn the Tyndals from my sight; for who can despise

them more than I do?—but it is useless to place before me, so pertinaciously, my folly in having borne with them. I am well aware of my error, without requiring any one to heap my transgressions before my eyes at every turn. Reproach never heals a wound."

"I do not speak in reproach, Penelope," replied Julia, in accents that overcame Miss Wycherly's quick temper; "I only point out the means to serve you, because you asked me to do so."

"Don't heed my words, Julia," exclaimed Miss Wycherly, continuing her restless walking up and down the library; "I speak in bitter misery, and know not what I say. Do not leave me, for I know you are kind, and not given to take offence, and I am almost maddened with vexation. Tell me what to do, Julia, and I swear to be guided by you."

"I repeat my words, then, Penelope. Return with me into the drawing-room; do not give Mr. Henry Tyndal all your attention, and bear with Mr. Spottiswoode's attention to Lady Anna: it will not last long."

"Oh, Julia!" sighed Miss Wycherly, "if I could but think you a true prophet — but I will do as you wish; I will try to bear the sight of

Lady Anna, but the idea gives me a shuddering fit. See how I tremble."

"You do tremble, Penelope, but a determined effort will subdue it."

Julia rubbed Miss Wycherly's hands, which were deadly cold, and replaced her hat, as the poor girl sat trembling, and incapable of assisting herself. Julia also smoothed the curls which fell in abundance upon her pale cheeks. "And now, Penelope, take my arm, and let us take one steady turn through the room, to try your powers."

Miss Wycherly took Julia's offered arm, and proceeded towards the door. "Let us go into the drawing-room at once," she said. "With you I have given way, because I am assured of your sympathy and secrecy; but to no other eye will I betray my repentance or my sorrow. I may look ill—I am ill—but no one shall say Penelope Wycherly pines for Charles Spottiswoode."

Miss Wycherly's sentiment operated at once upon her nerves and manners: no one could suppose she had just suffered a strong nervous attack, by the collected air of her entrance again into company. It was only the pallid complexion and calm demeanour, which betrayed

recent illness to her friends; and Mrs. Pynsent, satisfied that her niece could never struggle against her disappointment with Tom, offered her every little soothing attention, and even seated her where she could not observe her cousin, still conversing with Anna Maria: her chair was placed near the window, immediately opposite to Mr. Spottiswoode and Lady Anna Herbert.

"There, Pen, dear, air will refresh you; but you have driven too far, I dare say: there, look straight before you, and don't keep turning round."

Lady Anna Herbert made a very polite speech, hoping Miss Wycherly had not been seriously ill, and Miss Wycherly passed through the forms of recognition with her ladyship with great presence of mind. Mr. Spottiswoode slightly bowed; but he did not address her, or join in the short conversation which ensued between the ladies. Miss Wycherly became silent, and struggled visibly, to Julia's eye, for resolution to bear up through the scene. Lady Ennismore broke up the meeting by ordering her carriage, and then Miss Wycherly's situation became oppressive. Tom Pynsent came forward to his cousin with looks of interest. "Cousin Pen, I will drive your carriage home, for Miss Julia Wetheral

says you are not fit to hold the reins, and I think so too."

Lady Spottiswoode and her daughter entreated Miss Wycherly to suffer Mr. Pynsent to take her place, and renounce the idea of driving.

"The air will revive me," said Miss Wycherly, her lips quivering as she spoke. "I am fatigued, I believe, and I will gladly allow Tom to drive; but I cannot sit in the carriage. I must be in the air."

Mrs. Pynsent felt for her niece, and she resolved to prevent her suffering the distress of sitting a couple of hours by the side of Tom, who was now as good as married to Miss Wetheral. She applied to Mr. Spottiswoode.

"Here, Charley, can't you drive the ladies home? It's all in your way, you know, and quite out of Tom's. Suppose you drive your party into Shrewsbury, and Pen will drive herself on to Lidham; the distance is a trifle from Shrewsbury."

Mr. Spottiswoode expressed himself ready to undertake the office of coachman, if Miss Wycherly approved of his skill: Miss Wycherly caught at this one last opportunity of seeing and speaking to her lost lover: she rose from her chair, and reseated herself.—

"I shall be happy if you....yes." Not a word more could pass her lips, though she tried to articulate. Mr. Spottiswoode looked earnestly at her pale countenance, and appeared struck by her agitation. Mrs. Pynsent's heart was disturbed by her poor niece, Pen.

"That arrangement will do, boys. Tom, just shew Miss Wetheral the new picture in the study before she goes, and Charley, Miss Wycherly's groom, will ride your horse. I shall tell Bill Wycherly he ought to send the coachman with Pen, not a groom-fellow."

Lord Farnborough and his daughter rose to take leave. It appeared to Miss Wycherly's jealous eye, that Lady Anna spoke laughingly to Mr. Spottiswoode upon the subject of his new vocation, but she could not catch the words, or his reply: Lady Anna made her a passing bow as she joined Lord Farnborough, and they were gone when she passively sunk upon a sofa by Julia's side, exhausted with her efforts. "Julia, this day decides my destiny—I am weaker than a child."

Mr. Henry Tyndal approached them to express his regret at Miss Wycherly's fatigue: she closed her eyes, and turned from him in disgust, abruptly exclaiming—

"I wish to be quiet and alone, Mr. Tyndal."

"I am glad you are not going to drive back," persevered Henry Tyndal; "I dare say Spottiswoode will drive you very well; he is a very fair hand at the ribbons. I'm sure I would drive you with the greatest pleasure in the world, Miss Wycherly, but I am not a dab at driving. I am glad, however, I shall be riding by your carriage: you will ride inside, of course: I hope —I beg you will ride inside."

Miss Wycherly looked daggers at the man with whom she had been so intimate for many days, and whom she had allowed to be constantly in attendance.

"I require no one's opinion, Mr. Tyndal, to regulate my actions, and I shall be obliged by your removing from before me."

"I am afraid Miss Wycherly is very ill," said Henry Tyndal, looking inquisitively at Julia. "What can we do for her, Miss Wetheral?"

"Do, for Heaven's sake, leave me!" cried Miss Wycherly, losing all patience at his including himself in her arrangements; "I will not be annoyed by your obstinate stupidity."

"Stupidity, Miss Wetheral! Now what can Miss Wycherly mean by stupidity, when I am so fearful about her driving home?"

Julia saw her friend's complexion reviving, and her eye lighting up with a thousand fires: in another moment, a torrent must overwhelm the unfortunate Henry Tyndal; but, as if to prove his utter blindness, he placed his own foot upon the precipice by offering to take her hand. Miss Wycherly felt the extent of her imprudence, in suffering the attendance of a man whom she never intended to marry, by its effects; but reason, at that moment, did not inform her impatient spirit that the fault was hers alone. All suggestions of reason were overpowered by anger, for Charles Spottiswoode's eyes were upon her, and he had witnessed the action. Miss Wycherly pushed Henry Tyndal's hand away, and rose from her seat, as she replied, with great impetuosity,

"If you ever presume to approach me with familiarity, I will tell you how I abhor the insolence, and resent the affront. How dare you attempt to touch me, Mr. Tyndal?"

Mr. Tyndal was offended, but he never imagined insult and insolence could be implied in his well-intentioned movement: he, therefore, stood silent and sulky for a few moments. Miss Wycherly passed him, and took her station between Lady Spottiswoode and her aunt. Mrs. Pynsent was pleased to perceive her son still

absent, and her anxiety was sincere, in endeavouring to get her niece away from Hatton, and in preventing Tom's reappearance: she was sure Sally Hancock would think with her that, when once Tom was married, Pen would think no more of the matter. Lady Ennismore's departure destroyed all her intended plans for Penelope's peace of mind; for Miss Wetheral was recalled from contemplating the new picture, and where her fairy footsteps led, there followed Tom Pynsent. It was in vain that Mrs. Pynsent bustled round her niece, and recommended her to Mr. Spottiswoode's care; Tom's first step was to bring Anna Maria up to his cousin.

"We have hardly spoken together, have we, Pen, in this confounded bustle? but here's my little wife, come to ask how you are, and to say you must always be glad to see us at Lidham, when you set up with you know who." Tom looked knowingly at Henry Tyndal.

"We have ever been good friends, Penelope, and a closer connexion shall not disunite us," said Anna Maria, as they shook hands. Tom Pynsent, infinitely too happy to remain stationary, walked away with his prize, and Miss Wycherly remained with the Spottiswoodes. Mr. Charles Spottiswoode was giving all his

attention to some coloured prints on hunting subjects, when Mrs. Pynsent summoned him.

"Here, Charley, your party are waiting for you, and you are sitting dumb-founded, like a lover bewitched. Pen, who do you suppose Charley is thinking of? Who is a long way on her road to Farnborough Stacey, Charley?"

Mr. Spottiswoode hastily put away the prints; and Miss Wycherly was fast sinking into the depression which follows effort of any kind, when Tom Pynsent returned, in high feather, from assisting the Wetheral party into their carriage. He flew to Miss Wycherly.

"Cousin Pen, my little wife commands me to dine at Wetheral to-day, so I shall see you properly packed up under Spottiswoode's care: very good thing Spottiswoode was here, or I should have driven you home in a towering passion for standing in my way. Come this way, Pen, my little wife sends you a message, and so does her sister: I must tell them as a profound secret."

"You be hanged, Tom, with your secret!" said his mother, "and do not keep Pen from her party."

Tom Pynsent dragged Miss Wycherly into the large bay-window, in spite of opposition.

"I don't understand ladies' ways just yet, Pen, but I am ordered to say these words from

my little wife, 'Be firm;' and her sister desired me to say, 'All things must end well, if patient.' Now the devil a bit can I make out any meaning from either sentence, can you?"

"Yes, I understand, Tom; and tell them this evening for answer, 'Amen.'"

"You are all a parcel of riddles, Pen; what has 'amen' to do with your affairs. I say, Pen, what's all this with Spottiswoode?"

Miss Wycherly tried to answer her cousin's question lightly, but she burst into tears.

"Oh, ho, that's it, Pen, is it?" Tom Pynsent pronounced the words slowly, as if awakened to some new idea gradually. "All must end well, be firm, and amen. I see something now, by Jove."

His cousin made no reply, but the tears coursed down her cheeks. Tom Pynsent was sorry for her, and he put his arm round her waist, to suit the action to the word.

"Never mind, Pen; if you've quarrelled, touch your swain up with a bit of sugarcandy as you go to Shrewsbury. Pitch it in smoothly, Pen, and Spottiswoode will turn like the sunflower. Don't cry, cousin Pen, it makes me dismal—d—n it, don't cry!"

Mrs. Pynsent underwent considerable anxiety

during the *tête-à-tête*, but, when her son became tender, her interference became imperative.

" Tommy, what are you squeezing your cousin there about, when you are nearly married; secrets are ill-bred things, Master Tommy."

Miss Wycherly's distress became apparent, and she threw open the window; her cousin good-humouredly and awkwardly endeavoured to conceal her from observation, by pointing out the beauties of the view.

" There, Pen, are the trees I spoke of, (clear up and dry your eyes, Pen) and my father talks of planting upon that hill, (don't let any one guess you are down in the mouth, Pen). I think I like it best as it now stands. Spottiswoode, Tyndal, give me your opinion."

The gentlemen were soon engaged in disputing the propriety of planting, or not planting a fine swell in the park, each arguing upon their opinions, enabling Miss Wycherly to recover some degree of composure; and, when her well-appointed equipage drove to the door, she was able to perform her adieus with tolerable calmness. Tom Pynsent offered his arm to Lady Spottiswoode.

" Now, my lady, three gentlemen can't cut themselves down into two, so I shall take charge

of you, while they fight for your daughter and Pen."

Mr. Spottiswoode stood irresolute for an instant, but the Mr. Tyndals took possession of Miss Spottiswoode; neither of those gentlemen approached Miss Wycherly. Mr. Spottiswoode was, of course, under the necessity of leading her to the carriage, but it took place in profound silence. Tom Pynsent, now awake to his cousin's state of mind, managed every thing for her.

"There, ladies, you are comfortable. Pen, let me place *you* comfortably upon your throne."

Mrs. Pynsent screamed from the drawing-room window, "I say, Tom, put Pen inside!"

Tom Pynsent, however, seated his cousin safely on the "throne," as she had always designated the coach-box, and Mr. Spottiswoode took his seat by her side; the Mr. Tyndals also mounted their horses, and rode away.

Mr. Spottiswoode paused to admit of Tom Pynsent's careful arrangement of his cousin's box-cloak, but Mrs. Pynsent again screamed from the window:—

"I say, Tom, you'll be too late for Wetheral!"

Tom Pynsent noticed his mother's exclama-

tions by a sharp movement of the elbow, and remained till he had adjusted every thing with precision. He then shook his cousin's hand forcibly, and descended upon the steps of the door. "All's right, Spottiswoode."

The carriage was soon lost behind the knoll, which had been the subject of dispute.

The Mr. Tyndals appeared no more by the side of the carriage, and a long silence was broken by a remark from Mr. Spottiswoode.

"I wonder we see nothing of the Tyndals."

Miss Wycherly answered, half hesitating, "I believe I have offended Mr. Henry Tyndal."

"That is to be regretted," was Mr. Spottiswoode's reply, and a second silence ensued; the remainder of the drive was passed without a word on either side. Lady Spottiswoode urged Miss Wycherly to remain with them and dine; but Penelope's heart was too ill at ease to accept her hospitality. Her pallid countenance and hurried voice pleading excuses, spoke more powerfully than words could do, and her friends forbore to press her compliance. Mr. Spottiswoode still held the reins, and evinced no intention to quit the box. Miss Wycherly dared not meet his eye, as she thanked him for the trouble he had taken.

"You must not return thanks yet, for my task is not ended," replied Mr. Spottiswoode, "I shall drive you safely to Lidham."

"Pray—not for the world!" exclaimed Miss Wycherly, fixing her eyes upon her companion, in the energy of speaking; Mr. Spottiswoode's face wore a mild expression, and a smile quivered on his lip, but it fled at her exclamation, and his manner resumed its reserve. She remembered Julia's charge to be gentle; she remembered her cousin's charge to "pitch it in smoothly;" she saw also Mr. Henry Tyndal walking his horse in the distance.

"Yes, yes, Charles Spottiswoode, drive on, and drive fast—don't wait for any one!"

"Not for Tyndal?" asked Mr. Spottiswoode, provokingly.

"Not for a human being—drive on, I beseech you!"

Mr. Spottiswoode obeyed, and the carriage proceeded with rapidity in the direction of Lidham.

Three miles were traversed, and Lidham rose among its woods in grandeur, ere Miss Wycherly attempted to speak; she had taxed her memory to bring forward some topic of conversation, but it played her false; she had awaited a

remark from her companion, upon which to ground her intended kindness, and it had not reached her ear—her heart now pined to recover its former ease and happiness, yet no opportunity offered to attempt the resumption. To begin the subject voluntarily, was a thought which fled at its very birth. What! own herself in the wrong, and apologize for having given pain to a worthy heart? Ask for pardon, when she had insulted a human being in the dearest feelings? and, when her spirit longed to be at peace with her lover, full of its own injustice and wrong? forbid it, womanly dignity!

Mr. Spottiswoode passed through the lodge at Lidham, and yet Miss Wycherly persevered in her silence; no matter, Mr. Wycherly was in sight, and the hour was past for repentance; she must henceforth submit to bear a gnawing and unpitied remorse for her levity of conduct, and for the knowledge that she had thrown away the very opportunity she had coveted, to try her power upon her lover's forgiveness. To her "dignity" she must sacrifice an ingenuous confession of sorrow for an error, heartless as it was uncalled for; and the demands of "dignity" superseded the claim of right. So do women often create their own misery, by daring to

offend, yet quailing under the degradation of revoking an ungenerous speech.

Mr. Wycherly returned to the house, and was ready to receive his daughter and Mr. Spottiswoode when they drove up in his usual way. It never occurred to him that the somewhat long absence of the latter from Lidham was a sure prognostic of a misunderstanding between the parties most interested in the visits.

"Why, Spottiswoode, you are a truant, but Pen has caught you at last, I see. She and I thought you were gone for ever, but I'm glad to see you, however." Mr. Wycherly handed his daughter from the barouche-box. "Well, now, come down, for dinner has been ready this half-hour; down with you, my good fellow."

Mr. Spottiswoode declined staying dinner; he would take his own horse, and return to Shrewsbury.

"My good fellow, what's the matter with you? you won't think of losing your dinner? Nonsense, my dear sir; stay and take your dinner, and go home afterwards, if you like. Here, Pen, try your eloquence."

But Miss Wycherly had flown in sorrow and anger to her own room. Mr. Spottiswoode perceived her departure, and it decided his own;

he could not be prevailed upon to defer his ride home till the evening. It was evident Miss Wycherly got out of his way, and her manner towards him was offensive; he could not think of remaining at Lidham, to subject himself to repeated annoyances; Mr. Wycherly pressed in vain.

"Well, Spottiswoode, you are determined, so I can't help it; but I think there is something in the wind."

"I am returning to my mother's house," replied Mr. Spottiswoode, as he shook hands.

"Give my compliments," said Mr. Wycherly, "and tell her I say you are an obstinate mule."

CHAPTER IX.

Miss Wycherly began to lose all hope of recovering her position in Mr. Spottiswoode's heart, unless she could prevail upon herself to make the *amende honorable;* and to that wretched alternative her mind would not bend. Rather would she endure the horrible idea of losing him; rather would she suffer the pangs of jealousy to distract her heart, than "bow down" before him she had offended, or say one word which could lead him to suppose she retracted her offensive coquetry. For some days her spirit chafed in solitude and in silence, and Julia received the following note, a week subsequent to their meeting at Hatton.

"For Heaven's sake, Julia, come to me for one hour, and leave Lord Ennismore behind! Don't bring him to Lidham, for I hate the sight and sound of lovers; come alone, and listen to the woes of poor

"Penelope Wycherly."

Julia attended her summons, but Lord Ennismore did not remain behind; he attended his mother and his intended bride in the carriage, and Lady Ennismore deposited Julia at Lidham, promising to call for her on their return from Shrewsbury. Julia found her friend pale and ill with watching and fretting; Miss Wycherly received her with open arms.

"Oh, Julia, if you knew what I have suffered since we met last, you would pity me! I am so glad you are come to me without your overseers!"

"Who are my overseers?" asked Julia, laughing at the term.

"You know I must mean the Ennismores, Julia: you are never to be seen without mother and son. Sit down, my dear, and hear my complaint."

Miss Wycherly gave Julia an exact and long statement of all that had taken place since they had met at Hatton, and her voice became agitated as she dwelt upon Mr. Spottiswoode's silence during the drive, and his apparent determination not to give her an opportunity to express her feelings. "This, Julia, was the most cruel part of his conduct," she continued. "How can a woman advocate her cause, when

a man is resolved to be silent? I may have acted wrong in the beginning, but the blame rests with him now. I have only to be wretched all my life, and shut myself up at Lidham."

Tears rushed to her eyes, but she struggled to subdue all appearance of emotion. Julia was preparing to speak, but a wave of the hand deterred her.

"Let me say all I have to say, Julia, and then applaud or blame me as you please. If I was foolish to show caprice and folly at that critical moment, Spottiswoode has exhibited cruelty and ill-temper ever since. He knew I meant to accept him some time or other, and he was needlessly hasty in acting so violently and promptly upon a nonsensical speech of mine. Suppose every man was to fly away at a woman's playfulness? I assure you, Julia, I was very ill when I came from Hatton; and yet the ill-natured creature has not inquired after me. I think you cannot uphold such a display of temper."

"I uphold Mr. Spottiswoode," replied Julia, "upon many points, and I cannot flatter you, Penelope, by saying you have done right in one particular."

"Julia!" exclaimed Miss Wycherly, "never

desert a friend in distress, or take a man's part against her!"

"I am giving you my opinion, Penelope, and Mr. Spottiswoode will never hear the substance of our conversation from myself. You have vexed and offended him; you have flirted very publicly with Henry Tyndal; and you have allowed Mr. Spottiswoode to imagine you have refused himself, after allowing his attentions for years—oh, Penelope, from your very childhood."

Miss Wycherly coloured, and her tears began to flow, but she made no reply. Her friend continued:—

"A woman may teaze a man who is comparatively a stranger to her, and she may believe herself making trial of his temper and affection; but Mr. Spottiswoode has been born and educated amongst us, and his attachment has been too well known to the neighbourhood, and to yourself, to doubt its truth. Do you doubt his affection, Penelope?"

Miss Wycherly shook her head, but she did not trust herself to speak.

"Then why treat him with levity, and throw him into Lady Anna Herbert's power?"

"Good heavens, Julia!" shrieked Miss Wycherly, as she started up from her seat, "do you

know that for a certainty? Is he positively thinking of Lady Anna; positively leaving me for ever? Oh! don't in mercy tell me so!"

"I do not think it, Penelope, because I know he has loved you too long to care for another; but you have been very unkind, and it has broken the bond of esteem between you. Take care how you draw the reins too tightly, and lose him past all recovery."

"Oh, if you are my friend, Julia," cried Miss Wycherly, kneeling before her in agony — "if you have any love for your playfellow in youth, and your friend since we grew up together, act for me in this strait, and return me Spottiswoode's love."

"Then dismiss Henry Tyndal from your constant society, Penelope."

"Too happy to do so, Julia!"

"Let Mr. Spottiswoode see by your conduct and manners, that you regret having pained him, Penelope."

"Alas! he will never give me an opportunity, Julia."

"Then make one, Penelope. If you love him as truly as you say you do, he is worth the sacrifice of an ill-judged pride. You have

offended him; express your regrets courageously, and recover his esteem."

"I should die before the words could be spoken, Julia," said her friend, rising from her attitude of humility, and reseating herself.—"I should die while I was confessing my sorrow. Don't ask me to acknowledge error; it would be a bitter task, and I never can sue for a husband —no, that I never, never can do."

"My dear Penelope....."

"Think of any other way, Julia, but not that dreadfully degrading task of imploring pardon—of bowing down before an offended lover! I should never again be able to assert my power!"

"We see things very differently, Penelope. Remember the extremely keen feelings of Mr. Spottiswoode, and the pain he has suffered in your flirtation with Henry Tyndal!"

"He has brought it upon himself."

"And you are content to resign Mr. Spottiswoode for the indulgence of false pride, Penelope—to lose the affection of a kind, constant lover, because you cannot condescend to say you were wrong! Then Lady Anna will be a happy woman if she can succeed you."

"You drive me wild with naming Lady Anna!" cried Miss Wycherly. "No one shall

succeed me in Charles Spottiswoode's heart, or I'll not stay at Lidham to see it. I believe I am proud, Julia, too proud for my peace of mind, but I shall never conquer it; it will drive me to my grave."

"Struggle against such an ignoble passion, Penelope."

Mr. Wycherly's voice resounded through the hall, calling for his daughter. "I say Pen!—here! halloo, Pen!"

"I cannot meet him with these red eyes," hastily observed Miss Wycherly. "My dear dear Julia, do speak for me!"

Julia joined Mr. Wycherly in the hall, who politely apologised for his vociferation; he was not aware of her presence at Lidham; he was only calling on Pen, to order some bread and cheese for Spottiswoode, and one or two hungry dogs, who would not dismount; but the servants were gone for the refreshments, and he would not detain her, or tease Pen, who was any thing but well.

"If Mr. Spottiswoode is at the hall-door, I should like much to see him for a few moments," was Julia's observation.

"He is here, and Tyndal, father and son. I can't get any of them to dismount; when they

see you, Miss Julia, one or two may change their mind, and prefer eating in-doors. I'll tell Spottiswoode you are here; or if you take my arm and show yourself, the effect will be greater."

Julia accompanied Mr. Wycherly to the door, and, after a few general compliments had passed, she addressed herself particularly to Mr. Spottiswoode, in a low voice.

"Mr. Spottiswoode, I wish to speak with you; can you leave your party?"

"Certainly; I shall feel honoured by any command from you." Mr. Spottiswoode dismounted, and gave his horse to one of the Lidham grooms.

"There!" cried Mr. Wycherly. "I told you so, Miss Julia, I told you what would happen, didn't I? Tyndal is good for nothing, but his son will follow the lead."

It was Mr. John Tyndal who accompanied his father, and they were not able to accept the tempting invitation—"they would just take a hurried snack upon their horses, and proceed; would Wycherly join them?"

"And leave Spottiswoode to the ladies' care?"

"To be sure; Spottiswoode was a lady's man, and they were always petted animals."

"Well, Miss Julia," said Mr. Wycherly, "I

give Spottiswoode into your hands, and you are responsible for consequences. Pen and you will entertain him as long as he behaves well."

Julia promised to be his guardian angel, and she proceeded with Mr. Spottiswoode to the sitting-room, where Miss Wycherly was lying extended upon the sofa, thoughtful and hopeless of ever seeing happy days again, if they were to be purchased by her own submission. She rose slowly as the door opened.

"What a time you have been flirting with papa, Julia!" she exclaimed, reproachfully. At that moment she perceived Mr. Spottiswoode, and a cry of surprise burst from her lips, but she did not advance to receive him. Mr. Spottiswoode stood near the door, and, resenting the coldness of his reception, he spoke only to Julia.

"Miss Wetheral, you wished to speak with me; may I beg the favour of your communication?"

"It is comprised in few words, Mr. Spottiswoode. My friend Penelope is distressed and grieved at having given you unprovoked offence, and she pines to recover your esteem."

"No—no—it is not true!" shrieked Miss Wycherly, hiding her face among the sofa pillows.

"Mr. Spottiswoode," continued Julia, "you are both unhappy, and this misunderstanding will never end without the assistance of a mutual friend. I now tell you, Penelope regrets her error, but fears to lessen herself in your opinion, by doing justice to herself and you. She is miserable at having quarrelled, and why should you not know it, and be friends?"

"By my soul, Penelope, I forgive the pain you have caused me," said Mr. Spottiswoode, approaching her, "if I may indeed believe you repent your unkind treatment."

Miss Wycherly shrunk from his touch as her lover offered to take her hand.

"I do not repent — I regret nothing — oh, Julia! was this kind to betray me! I will never believe you could love me, and yet have done this!" She rose to fly from the room, but Mr. Spottiswoode's arm, gently wound round her waist, arrested her flight.

"Stay, Penelope, and tell me why you avoid a man who loves you, and has borne what I have done for you? Tell me why you fear to say a kind thing, when it may balance a thousand harsh ones? Why must you distress a heart which never gave *you* uneasiness?"

"You have made me uneasy enough with

your attention to Lady Anna," replied Miss Wycherly, earnestly, yet not attempting to disengage herself.

"Do you seriously mean that, Penelope?" said Mr. Spottiswoode, looking inquiringly into her face.

"Yes, I do: your flirtation there was worse than mine with Henry Tyndal; every body knew *he* was not cared for, but *you* were abominable."

"Look me in the face, Penelope, and say that again if you dare."

Miss Wycherly did not repeat the accusation: how could she? Her lover held her to his heart, and every disquieting thought was stilled. She turned to Julia, and held out her hand.

"Julia, I will never forget that you brought about this reconciliation. I was too proud to own myself in fault, and had you not interfered, we should never have met again in harmony. I was agonised at first with anger, but it is past now; and, for Heaven's sake, don't let us quarrel again, Charles Spottiswoode!"

"Then you will have me without another interview with Captain Jekyl, Penelope?"

"Don't remember all that nonsense."

"I will not. Miss Wetheral, I am deeply obliged to you for your spirited and friendly conduct to us both. Had it not been for your intervention, I should not have entered Lidham again. Our mutual obligations, Penelope, are great to this excellent friend."

"When Julia wants a home or a friend, she will remember Lidham, Charles."

"Thank you," said Julia, smiling; "should such a time ever arrive, I will appear before you, to seek my home of rest."

Lady Ennismore's carriage was announced, and Julia rose to depart. "I have done an action which will always give me pleasure to contemplate," she said, as she shook hands with the reconciled pair. "I have linked the chain round my two friends, and it shall not break again. Penelope, I bespeak you upon a certain occasion; you must follow me to the altar when my hour comes."

"I will follow you to the death, my dear," replied her friend, "to the altar, to wealth, to misery, or the grave."

"Nay, only to the altar, Penelope; I will give you due notice."

Mr. Spottiswoode led her to the carriage, and repeated his acknowledgments. Lord Ennis-

more received her, and Julia left Lydham again, in company with those whom Miss Wycherly termed her overseers.

Wetheral Castle was now the scene of considerable bustle and gaiety. Lady Wetheral was destined, apparently, to succeed in every wish of her heart, for she had arranged and contrived to execute her plan of marrying both daughters on the same day. The Boscawens were invited to attend their nuptials; and Lady Ennismore, Mrs. Pynsent, and Lady Wetheral, united in wishing the day to be an early one. Lady Ennismore spoke in terms of elegant compliment, and expressed her maternal anxiety to see her son happily settled ere she retired to her seat in Lincolnshire; but Mrs. Pynsent did not attempt to press flowers of eloquence into her oratory.

"Here, let's have no dawdling, but let Tom get married; what's the use of kicking our heels here doing nothing? I'm for setting smartly to work, and naming a day. Come, this day three weeks I'll say, and Tom will back me."

Lady Wetheral saw every thing could safely be left to Mrs. Pynsent's care, as far as the time was concerned; she, therefore, gave her attention to ornamental attire, and complimented

Mrs. Pynsent by placing the day at her disposal. Mrs. Pynsent decided at once.

"Well then, I say this day three weeks, and no putting off."

From that hour, all was movement and consultation: Lady Ennismore and her son returned to Bedinfield to prepare for the bride's reception, and they were to reappear at Wetheral the week of the nuptials. Every body was to be congregated at Wetheral on the Monday preceding the ceremony, but the Boscawens were to spend a fortnight there, as Isabel would enjoy the sight of bridal finery.

Lady Wetheral received Isabel with all the honours due to her position in society. Anna Maria and Julia's future exaltation must place them beyond Isabel in pomp and circumstance; but still Mrs. Boscawen held a decided station, and she was mistress of Brierly. Mrs. Boscawen was therefore received at Wetheral with much ceremony and polite welcome. Isabel, however, returned to her early home a changed being: the light-hearted girl who had quitted Wetheral scarcely a twelvemonth, in smiles and joyous anticipations, returned a matron in appearance, grave and subdued in manner, and apparently frightened into stillness by her husband's stern

observation. She was no longer the sprightly, happy, madcap Isabel Wetheral; her laugh had fled, and even the smiles which used to pass in rapid succession over her bright face, stole now upon her lips slow and seldom. Her mother complimented Isabel upon the change so rapid and so complete.

"I am never weary admiring you, my dear Mrs. Boscawen; and I little imagined my romping daughter would be so soon transferred into an elegant, quiet matron. Your manners are quite perfect, my love."

A placid smile curled the lip of Isabel at this compliment.

"I am very quiet now, I believe; Mr. Boscawen dislikes laughing."

"It is not an accomplishment," said Lady Wetheral; "every common creature can laugh. I believe the loudest laughter is considered the pleasantest person among the commonality. I detest a laugher."

"I enjoyed laughing extremely," replied Isabel, with a sigh. "I should like to laugh again, but there is nothing laughable at Brierly. Mr. Boscawen does not like young people staying in the house, and I have mixed entirely among old people since I married."

"Your situation, my love! Mr. Boscawen is anxious to keep you quiet, I dare say."

"I should prefer having a friend or two with me to enliven Brierly," returned Isabel, gravely. "Mr. Boscawen liked to see me merry before we married, but now he says it is wrong. I think my sisters are foolish to marry. Anna Maria, you had better remain single, for Mr. Boscawen says young married women should not appear lively and ready to chat with gentlemen, and you know we chatted away here."

"Mr. Boscawen is elderly, my love; elderly gentlemen are very particular," observed Lady Wetheral, soothingly.

"Old or young, they are much the same, I believe; my jokes amused Mr. Boscawen extremely till I married. Papa always liked to see me happy, too; Mr. Boscawen's sister, Tabitha, reads such lectures if I laugh! I don't like her at all."

"I think you look extremely handsome and well, Mrs. Boscawen. Matrimony has improved you—confinement in two months time, you say? I wish I could offer you my assistance, my love; but you know what a poor nervous creature I am."

"Mr. Boscawen says I am only to have his sister Tabitha with me."

"An excellent arrangement, my love. Miss

Tabitha will not have the anxiety which would make *me* worse than useless. I dare say she is a steady sort of person."

"I don't like her at all, mamma; I would rather have you at Brierly."

"Me, my love! Oh, no! I am too nervous, not half so fitted for the department of nurse as good Miss Tabitha. Those old maids, you know, are calm and useful in their ignorance. I should be nervous, and make you so; Boscawen has arranged very prudently."

Isabel privately confessed to her sisters that if she had only suspected what her matrimony was to end in, nothing should have induced her to marry. That beautiful cloak with the leopard's claw had been of no use; not once had she occasion to wear it. Boscawen made her read history for some hours every day, which she forgot as soon as she closed the books; then Boscawen worried her with lessons of geography, and expected her to understand accounts, and comprehend housekeeping—a thing she detested; perhaps when she became a mother, she might have more power, but at present she was neither more nor less than a girl at school.

Isabel took great notice of Christobelle; and while her elder sisters were absorbed in preparation for their approaching nuptials, she was

her companion at all hours; and she loved to have her youngest sister constantly at her side. Mr. Boscawen freely indulged his lady in her love for Christobelle's society, and expressed himself pleased by her selection.

"I can have no objection, Isabel, to your youngest sister being with you, and if you can obtain your father's consent, you can take her to Brierly. I like her turn for reading; you can read together. I do not wish you to be mixed up with the foolish preparations going on among your sisters and mother — jewels and dresses, all nonsense. I wish you to attend particularly to history, that you may not be wanting in necessary information; and I expect your mornings will be devoted to study, as usual. Your youngest sister can be with you, and your studies may proceed together."

"I thought this fortnight was to be a holiday, Mr. Boscawen," said Isabel, mournfully.

"My dear Isabel, you have much to make up, and at your age much is acquired. I was distressed at hearing you assert to my sister a short time since, that you could reach France by land."

"Well, Mr. Boscawen, I did not know to the contrary."

"But you ought to know, my dear Isabel;

an ignorant woman at the head of a man's table is terrible. I am continually watching to repair your blunders."

"I made no blunders before I married, Mr. Boscawen."

Mr. Boscawen gave a grim smile at Isabel's assertion, and patted her shoulder with kind feeling.

"Yes, you did, and those blunders amused me; but, my dear Isabel, a lover is charmed with faults and blunders, which make a husband miserable, so read and improve yourself in knowledge. Chrystal is the best companion for you at ' etheral." In consequence of Mr. Boscawen's wish, Isabel and Christobelle studied together, and the child of ten years of age was even better acquainted with the elements of knowledge than the woman of eighteen. Isabel had an insuperable objection to study of any kind, and when Mr. Boscawen left the sisters together for an hour, Isabel quitted her dull history to seize upon Christobelle's little collection of story-books, or else she vented her disappointed feelings in warning her never to marry at all, but particularly an old man. It was all vanity and vexation of spirit; she had never seen company at Brierly; and Mr. Boscawen determined to re-

ceive none till she could conduct her own establishment; that time would never arrive, for she never could order any thing but mutton-chops and mashed potatoes. And Miss Tabitha scolded and lectured in vain. However, Mr. Boscawen said she might have Christobelle with her, and that was a blessing; for when she came, she might get out a little more.

Such was Isabel's course of life, after marrying precisely to have uncontrolled liberty, to ride all day in the gig, and fill Brierly as full as it could hold.

Tom Pynsent was very indignant at Isabel's mode of life. "What the devil did a man marry for, if a wife was only to be turned into a daughter? and what was a woman the better for having her head crammed with knowledge. For his part, he hoped Anna Maria could not tell great A from a bull's foot, and she would get no teaching at Hatton."

Mr. Boscawen persevered in his system, and only smiled grimly at the observations which were showered in his presence. No sort of excuse, no little morning gaiety, was allowed to prevail with him in liberating his wife from her course of study. Till four in the afternoon, Isabel was toiling at the arts and sciences; and

at that hour her husband took her an airing in the carriage which had so delighted her sight on her wedding-day: — she called it now her prison-house.

Mr. Boscawen's system of education, however unpalatable it proved to Isabel's taste, was one of gentleness, and of great importance to her mind. He was never harsh in his observations, and he bore with great patience his young wife's disinclination to improve her resources. Nothing could be more agreeably explained than Mr. Boscawen's views upon every subject. He imparted instruction so mildly, and varied his course of studies so insinuatingly, that the mornings flew past in really instructive yet pleasing pursuits.

At Christobelle's young age, she delighted in Mr. Boscawen's gentle administration, and no one ever before had power to withdraw her from her father's study. During Isabel's visit, Christobelle lived in her dressing-room; and when Mr. Boscawen walked out, Christobelle hovered round him, and listened to his kindly-expressed sentiments upon every trifle which she offered to his notice. Mr. Boscawen possessed but two failings; he had a most repulsive expression of countenance; and he married a young, laughing

girl, hardly out of the nursery, who could not appreciate his extensive knowledge, and who could never prove the companion his intellectual taste coveted. Caught by the vivacity and beauty of a sprightly girl, he had vainly promised himself pleasure in superintending her education, and in leading her talents towards the stores which learning could bestow: mortification was the result of his anxiety.

Mr. Boscawen was not the first wise man who fell in love, and fancied he could make a young creature happy, by endeavouring to raise her capacity to his own level. Many have tried the experiment and failed, because they would not believe the sparkling eye could emanate from gay spirits unconnected with scope of intellect, and because they expected that age and gravity could assimilate with youthful feelings and youthful views. Isabel was not adapted to the sameness of her life at Brierly: had she married a man more suited to her time of life, her joyous spirit would have met the cares of this world with lightheartedness and in smiles; but the awful countenance of her husband ever resting upon her — his perpetual anxiety respecting her manners— his remarks, so gentle yet so sternly spoken—all

pressed upon her mind, and weighed down her spirits.

Whenever Isabel spoke, her eye rested with alarm upon Mr. Boscawen; and it was evident she had been tutored into some degree of caution, by the unwearied lectures of Miss Tabitha Boscawen, upon the necessity of married ladies thinking before they spoke upon any subject. Lady Wetheral was enthusiastic in her praise of Isabel's improved appearance and manner, but her sisters and Miss Wycherly mourned over the change which had taken place. Miss Wycherly spoke openly her opinion.

"I declare, and I always did declare, it was a sinful act to give Isabel to that lanky, dark, awful Mr. Boscawen. The poor thing was not able to judge for herself, and she fancied every elderly man was like her father. I think such very unnatural matches should be prevented by act of parliament."

Isabel one morning stole away from her heavy volume of Rapin, to look over the wardrobe of the two brides, which had arrived from town, and were hung in magnificent array in their apartments. Miss Wycherly and Miss Spottiswoode were also sitting in judgment upon their beauty of make and material, and the whole

female population of Wetheral were admitted to admire and wonder over the costly arrangement. Isabel's eyes sparkled at the sight, and, with true girlish delight, she examined and applauded each article as it attracted her notice.

"Oh, Julia, this satin is yours, I am sure! Yes, that is Lady Ennismore at a first glance; how very beautiful! Ah, Julia! I hope you will wear it oftener than I have worn my pretty blue silk: I shall wear it on your wedding-day, and that will be only the second time of its appearance upon any stage. I dare say it will look old-fashioned now compared to yours. One small flounce, you see—how pretty! my blue silk has no flounce." She passed on to the case which contained the jewels presented to Julia by Lady Ennismore.

"Well, Julia, this *is* a sight! how very sparkling and brilliant! I wonder how often you will wear them? Mr. Boscawen does not like me to wear the beautiful brooch papa gave me; he says it is attending to the outside of the platter instead of the inside, and then he said something in Greek or French, I don't know which; but my poor ornament was laid up in silver paper again. I hope Lord Ennismore will let you dress handsomely, Julia."

"I never cared much about dress, Isabel," said Julia; "if dear Augustus dislikes dress, I shall renounce it very willingly."

"Would you, indeed? Ah! but you are very fond of Lord Ennismore, and he likes every thing you do and say: so did Mr. Boscawen once. Oh, Anna Maria, this muslin dress, worked so divinely! One comfort is, Tom Pynsent will let you wear muslin and satin by day and by night, if you choose to do so. Lord Ennismore I know nothing about, but I *do* know my old partner Tom's good-nature. How I wish Mr. Boscawen was like Tom Pynsent! Mr. Boscawen is very kind, though: I am sure he never contradicts me in any thing, but he talks me into his measures, which is just the same thing. I never could argue; and if I did, Mr. Boscawen talks so many languages, I could never argue against them all. How I have been talking!—I could almost fancy myself unmarried. What was that?—a bell? I must run away, or Mr. Boscawen will find me a truant when he returns."

"See here, Isabel," exclaimed Miss Wycherly—"here is a poplin sweetly trimmed; don't run away!"

"My dear, I must; don't tempt me; I am

sure that was Mr. Boscawen's bell, to ask where I was. It is airing time, and I dare say my prison-house is at the door."

Away flew Isabel, in alarm, lest her husband should have perceived her flight from the dressing-room.

"Delightful specimen of matrimony!" observed Miss Spottiswoode.

"It is not a comfortable view of the state," replied Miss Wycherly; "but Isabel and Mr. Boscawen were never intended to become man and wife. It has been one of those unaccountable proceedings which do sometimes occur, and which causes misery to two very excellent people. Either would have been happy in a different connexion: I think Isabel ought to have married John Tyndal."

"And why John Tyndal?" asked Miss Spottiswoode, hastily.

Miss Wycherly smiled. "Only, if it had so happened, Sophy, John Tyndal's good-nature would have given way to Isabel's tastes."

"He is the soul of good-nature and kindness," replied Miss Spottiswoode, "yet he might not have been happy with Isabel."

"Perhaps not, if he liked another lady better; but don't blush, Sophy. I have offended his

brother for ever; Henry Tyndal meets me now, and will not see me, or bow as we pass."

"Because you behaved very ill to him, and Charles too, Penelope."

"Well, now, Sophy, that is past and forgiven, so let us think of the girls' wedding-clothes, and all the bustle of this day week."

The ladies again proceeded to comment upon the beauty of the dresses, and all subjects gave way to the engrossing topic of dress and jewels.

Tom Pynsent was firmly decided not to accept his father's resignation of Hatton upon his marriage; and Sir John Wetheral upheld him in his resolution. Lady Wetheral lost all patience with such determinations.

"I am sure, Sir John, the Pynsents are anxious to leave Hatton, and relinquish the trouble of superintending such large property. How much happier old Mr. Pynsent will be in some quiet nook, enjoying himself, if you did not fancy such foolish schemes, and innoculate Tom with the disease! I wonder, my dear Mr. Boscawen, you do not urge Sir John to allow Mr. Pynsent his own way in this matter."

"*Aparte mala cum est mulier, tum damum est bona*," said Mr. Boscawen.

"You agree with me? Is that your meaning when translated?"

"I do not," replied Mr. Boscawen, mildly; "I give my judgment entirely in favour of Tom Pynsent."

"You have not given the subject your best consideration, my love," observed her husband.

"The thing requires no consideration, Sir John: you are traversing Mr. Pynsent in his wishes, and preparing severe pain for me. I always hoped and believed Anna Maria would be near me, and you are endeavouring to banish her the county. I confess I am ill prepared for this blow, Sir John Wetheral, and I hope I shall not be extremely ill from the shock."

Sir John endeavoured to explain away his lady's objections to the present arrangement; but her mind was totally overpowered by the reflection that Hatton must not yet shelter his daughter.

"I don't understand you, Sir John. Nothing can explain away my distress at perceiving you determined to expel my daughter from Hatton, and I can only appeal to Tom Pynsent from your harsh resolution. I shall implore him to let my daughter be near her mother."

Tom Pynsent's mind was composed of kindly

materials, but his perceptions of right were always clear, and his conduct did credit to those perceptions, by resisting, formidably and pertinaciously, every attempt to attract him from the path chalked out by his straightforward, well-judging principles. Lady Wetheral's eloquent and parental complainings roused his best feelings, but Tom Pynsent was at this moment, as he ever had been, perfectly blind to all hints and concealed purposes. He read her ladyship's meaning, simply as a parent mourning her separation from a loved and gentle daughter, and his excellent heart prompted every means of consolation.

"God bless my soul, Lady Wetheral, I feel quite a brute in taking Anna Maria out of the neighbourhood, while you suffer so much—I am sure I am willing to do any thing to lessen your regret! Anna Maria, my dear little duck, what shall we do for Lady Wetheral?"

"To be separated from two daughters at once," remarked Lady Wetheral, despairingly—"to lose two children at once is a serious misery. Julia *must* live in Staffordshire—she must, and, of course, ought, to settle upon her husband's property: but my dearest Anna Maria need not surely desert us!"

"I'll tell you what I'll decide upon at once," cried Tom Pynsent.

Her ladyship listened with intense eagerness.

"I'll decide at once, and accept my father's offer to live——"

Lady Wetheral seized Tom Pynsent's large red hand. "You have given peace to my heart, Tom, to a mother's deep disquietude — I understand you — my Anna Maria will live near me. You will be brilliant, as I anticipated, my dear girl!"

"I'll do what I never thought I could do," continued Tom Pynsent; "but I am sure I'll not separate you from your daughter, if you love her as well as I do. Come, then, I'll accept my father's offer of a large house in Dog Pole; and though I never lived in a town, I'll do it to quiet your heart, Lady Wetheral."

Her ladyship sunk into a chair — she could only articulate, faintly, "Oh—no, no!"

"Yes, but I will, though, Lady Wetheral. I'll remove the kennel to Coleham, and then I can hunt; I'll amuse myself on Sundays with shewing my wife the hounds, and I must patronise the poor devils of players in an evening, to amuse my little woman here. I will do

it, upon my soul: I'm not joking, Lady Wetheral."

"No, it cannot be — I see it is wrong — no, you shall not live in Shrewsbury to please *me*," said her ladyship, writhing in horror; "my daughter would become ill in a close atmosphere. You would become disgusted too. I see very clearly my mistake—no, that must not be. A little effort will shake off maternal regrets." Lady Wetheral trembled with the remembrance even of Tom Pynsent's offer. Her daughter living in Dog Pole, and going to the play like a mechanic's wife! — oh, let her die first! She was obliged to have recourse to her salts.

Anna Maria was surprised at the strong emotion which seized upon her mother. She offered consolation in her own way.

"But, mamma, if you are so distressed at our leaving you, I beseech you to postpone my marriage for a short time, till the remembrance of Julia has subsided. I cannot bear to see you suffer, mamma. Let my marriage be suspended a fortnight—I know Tom will accede for my sake, won't you, dear Tom?"

"I would rather live in Dog Pole than postpone my marriage," answered Tom Pynsent, sturdily.

"Neither, neither," said Lady Wetheral, rising; "I will not hear of any change. I am foolish in my fondness, but I must have fortitude, like other mothers. I must remember I have Clara and poor little Chrystal to comfort me. Decide upon your place of residence, and so it is not a town or a village, I shall be satisfied."

Lady Wetheral quitted the room in a state of mind most pitiable; she had been foiled in her wish to see Anna Maria placed immediately at the head of the Hatton establishment, and, this one wish disappointed, she felt as though every other gratified vision of grandeur sank into nothingness; one defeat obliterated a thousand victories; such is the nature of a mind unaccustomed to meet impediments in its rapid course.

"Tom!" said his fair *fiancée*, as the door closed upon them, "I am going to wish a wish."

"You wished a pretty wish, just now, you little rascal, didn't you?" answered her lover, throwing his arm round Anna Maria, and squeezing her till she exclaimed:—

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, Tom! your arm is like a steam-engine in full play!"

"I'm afraid I am rough," said Tom, anxiously rubbing the arm which had been pinioned

to her side by his embrace, "but I am an awkward dog by nature. Come, what is your wish, and you shall have it; but, no more putting off the wedding-day, mind."

"I should like, Tom, to go to Paris."

"By Jove!" ejaculated Tom Pynsent, in extremity of astonishment, "by all the saints and holy women, what are we to do at Paris, my darling girl?"

"Just to see Paris, my dear Tom, and pass a few weeks there."

"I think I see myself in Paris, d—n me!" cried her lover, excited something beyond his usual subdued language in Anna Maria's presence: "the Frenchmen will hoot me through the streets; why, we can't manage a sentence in French between us!"

"We can hire somebody to speak for us, dear Tom, and every one speaks French now, except ourselves. I want to see Paris, and Blucher, and, what can it signify, whether we speak English or French?"

"How shall we eat their infernal frogs and garlic, Anna Maria?" asked Tom Pynsent, with a shudder, "and, what shall we do in a great city, without knowing their jargon? My dear girl, we shall be like the babes in the wood!"

"No, no, Tom, we shall get on like other people, and Sir John Spottiswoode delights in Paris; he wishes his mother and sister to join him, Penelope says. We shall find him out; and, then if you dislike Paris, we can return home, you know."

"I never was at sea in my life, Anna Maria; I never was even upon the Severn. Deuce take it, I shall be like the hounds at fault, and you, my poor girl, will want to get back to Shropshire."

"No, I shall not," said Miss Wetheral; "say, Tom, you will take me to Paris!"

"I'll take you to the world's end, my darling, if you fancy it; how is this little arm? I'm not fit to take charge of a creature like you, with my rough ways, but you shall have all your little whims gratified."

Thus, then, was a visit to Paris decided upon; and Tom Pynsent renouncing his country, and truly English tastes, gave way at once to Anna Maria's wishes, and commenced preparations for a foreign expedition. Certainly no character possessed more real kindness, than the unselfish and affectionate Tom Pynsent, for, of all men upon earth, he was the least calculated, in taste and habits, to relish even a temporary banishment from his native land.

CHAPTER X.

There was wassail in Wetheral Castle previous to the nuptials; a scene of gaiety repugnant to Sir John's ideas of propriety, but which was not checked by the simple expression of his wishes. In vain he remonstrated against the levity which surrounded him; in vain he disapproved of the course of dinner-parties which preceded so immediately an event of deep importance to the happiness of two children. His lady protested the "proprieties" were not infringed by a house full of company.

"If, Sir John, your daughters were on the eve of marriage with plebeian men of wealth, or had they chosen to select professional men, or even men of inferior weight in their respective counties, I grant you it would be an unnecessary display; in the present case, the neighbourhood expect a gaiety, which throws a sort of halo round the approaching event. One daughter, love, becomes a countess on Thursday next, and

one daughter weds the finest property in Shropshire. I wonder you do not exult with me! I have been complimented with burning hearts, I am sure, by all my married friends, and, as Lady Farnborough said yesterday very truly, I have monopolized the first matches in the counties of Salop and Staffordshire. I am aware I have done so; I am aware I have taken great pains to promote my children's welfare. I may say, too, Julia's match was exclusively my own, in its invention and maturity."

"My dear Gertrude," replied Sir John, calmly, "I am satisfied if my girls are marrying according to their own satisfaction, as far as regards themselves; but I cannot exult in losing two members of my family, when I strongly doubt the happiness of one of them."

"My dear love! you have the oddest notions! but you were always unaccountable. I am proud to receive the congratulations of my friends. I wish Anna Maria had persuaded Tom to remain at Hatton, when it was first named, for old Pynsent may live these twenty years! However, since Hatton is out of the question, I am glad they are going abroad. I should not like Anna Maria placed in any situation less magnificent than Hatton, and people of distinc-

tion crowd to Paris now, to see the allied sovereigns. Tom has bought a very handsome travelling chariot; his appointments will be perfect."

"I should think, Gertrude, less bustle would be more agreeable to you, on the eve of parting with your daughter for twelve months."

Lady Wetheral sighed. "A little amusement, perhaps, is useful in softening my regrets, and Mrs. Boscawen, poor child, is so delighted with the entertainments! How Mr. Boscawen has managed, I cannot imagine; *I* never could silence Isabel, but he has succeeded; and Isabel is really a little star now in society. *I* had quite given her up. Mrs. Boscawen, poor child, was in ecstacies over her sisters' wardrobes. They have jewels which a crowned head might prize, certainly; whereas, Boscawen gave Isabel nothing. I confess I do sometimes feel indignant that the Lady of Brierly is so very simply dressed, but I never liked Boscawen's temper."

"He considers Isabel too young to indulge in folly, my dear Gertrude."

"Temper, all temper," returned her ladyship; "an old man marrying a young wife, should consider *her* tastes and *her* wishes. What did Isabel become Mrs. Boscawen for, but to com-

mand advantages, and surround herself with comforts?"

"Then Isabel must learn by experience the wickedness of sacrificing herself to mercenary views. Chrystal," continued Sir John, addressing himself to his youngest child, with earnestness of voice and manner, "your education was made over to my care. Never let your mind rest upon the follies which women delight to enjoy at the expence of happiness and respectability. Let your wishes, my child, rest upon better and nobler views; and advise your elder sisters, when they perceive the fallacy of hunting after useless pleasures, to turn aside from ambition, and think what a bitter draught has been presented to their lips."

"My dear love, a perfect homily!" exclaimed his lady, smiling, "and my youngest daughter's very unpronounceable name will be less disagreeable than her temper, if she is to preach to her family upon your recommendation. I am quite amused by your humility, considering the splendid matches your daughters have made. I am not so gifted with humble feelings; I am silly enough to rejoice in their welfare. The Kerrisons, my love, dine with us to-day. Sir Foster and myself are almost lovers; I am de-

lighted with his sentiments — most excellent man! I told him he must allow us to run away with his pretty daughter for a few weeks, after my dear girls are gone to their new homes. Clara and you, Chrystal, will miss your sisters. I shall be very low myself. Dear girls! I told Sir Foster, Miss Kerrison's lively spirits would be of so much benefit to us! He seemed flattered, I thought, by my remark, and gave such a polite bow of acquiescence! Sir Foster is really a gentleman of the old school; a picture quite."

Lady Wetheral became loquacious in praise of Sir Foster; and in her fulness of commendation, the purpose of her heart betrayed itself.

"I am so provoked when I hear people repeating all the idle reports which emanate from discharged grooms, and low servants. Just the very class of society who deal so largely in ungrateful abuse. I can gather from Sir Foster's sentiments, how gentle his nature must be, and his large family, I am sure, are excellently managed. Such order and economy in every department! I judge, of course, from fountain-head particulars, for Sir Foster and myself talked a great deal upon the subject at Hatton yesterday. I told him his daughter would im-

prove my Clara in matters of economy; her ideas, I said, were at present crude and undigested upon the subject, but I knew her tastes pointed that way."

"So Clara and Kerrison are to marry, are they?"

"You may truly appeal to me, my love, for, indeed, you have little part in your children's prospects. Yes, I have decided upon Kerrison and Clara. No alliance can compete with those which will be celebrated on Thursday, but I bear in mind the old proverb, 'marry your sons when you will, but marry your daughters when you can.' Ripley is the next eligible situation in Shropshire, now Hatton is secured. If Clara will only check her temper! I am sure I have lectured enough upon the subject, and I tell her four or five weeks of gentleness is all I ask at her hands."

"Gertrude, you are wrong, you are wicked," exclaimed Sir John, for once rousing himself into determination, and rising from his chair, "I have been weak and wicked myself in allowing you such uncontrolled liberty over my children's minds, and, God help me, I shall have reason to repent it too soon. I tell you Clara shall *not* marry Kerrison. I tell you, Gertrude,

I will not have her sacrificed to that violent and coarse fellow at Ripley, to drive a woman into misery or sin, because your ambition will be ministered to !"

Her husband's sudden energy was wholly unexpected, its effect was powerful; her ladyship sank into the seat he had just quitted.

"Really, Sir John, your violence kills my poor nerves. I am not equal to contend against such dreadful exhibitions of temper. My poor constitution requires perfect tranquillity, almost amounting to total silence, and these explosions of passion do me a great deal of harm. Indeed, Sir John, you have overpowered a poor nervous creature." His lady's hands trembled as she spoke, her voice faltered, and the tears coursed down her cheeks.

Did Sir John Wetheral ever resist his lady's pleading when it took the form of suffering, and spoke in the silent eloquence of grief? When did he ever create a sorrow, or cause a heart-felt reproach, without enduring far greater disquietude, from the knowledge of having given pain! He took his lady's hand, and bent kindly over her.

"Gertrude, this is sad work, and the consequences of my weak indulgence will be sadder

still. I have given way to you in every wish of your heart, and submitted my better judgment to your tears, till my authority has passed away, and I am a cipher in all affairs connected with my children. In this particular, however, I will be heard and obeyed. I will not allow of a distant allusion to Clara's marriage with Sir Foster; and the instant I believe, or have reason to *suspect*, any private attempt to draw Clara into such a hateful connection, that instant I will remove my family from Wetheral, and reside in Scotland."

"My head! my poor head, Sir John! Send Thompson to me, my love, for my brain seems on fire! I declare men are so brutal, women's hearts should be cut out of wood. I am quite unfit for company to-day."

Sir John did not ring for Thompson: he had much to say, now that the indolence of his nature was roused into effort, and his mind dwelt with anger upon the meditated sacrifice of Clara.

"Never mind company, my dear Gertrude; I wish all company had been spared this week. The few days which intervene between the present hour and my poor girl's wedding-day

should have passed in domestic privacy and reflection on their parts."

Lady Wetheral's distress and emotion allowed *herself* no moment for reflection. She hastily exclaimed :—

"The less they think about it, poor things, the better!"

"This is a fearful idea, Gertrude. If you conceive matrimony to be a leap which only the ignorant should take, you condemn yourself in your own plans. A husband-hunting parent, who draws a veil before the victim's eyes, and leads it blindfold to the altar, is a creature to be feared and hated."

Lady Wetheral's astonishment at this remark, pronounced with energy by her husband, produced total forgetfulness of hysterical assistance. Her anxiety to remove blame from her measures, gave seriousness to her manner, but dispelled for the moment all idea of having recourse to fictitious aids. Her lips quivered, but not a tear flowed.

"I am sorry, Sir John, I am grieved to be supposed to sacrifice—to sell my poor children. I seek their good, I wish them to marry well, as I married myself, but you are harsh to call them victims. I have done my duty by them ; I have

obtained excellent establishments for my three eldest, and received congratulations from my friends. I really cannot receive your reproach."

"Then why are they to dissipate thought, Gertrude, and fly from reflection?"

"I'm sure I don't know, my love. One is not always prepared with reasons in an instant: marriage brings cares. They will have the same anxieties about their children's establishments that I have endured. I suppose that was my meaning. I really can't tell; but you frighten me with such violent expressions."

"Gertrude," said Sir John, seriously, "let all painful thoughts and subjects be banished between us. I exact one promise from you."

"My dear love, I never made a promise in my life."

"Then let it be made now, and stand in your mind in its singleness and sacred meaning."

"A promise would overcharge my heart, and burst from my lips, Sir John. I hate promises."

"Yet you promised at the altar, Gertrude, to love and honour, and obey your husband."

"These are words of course, love, and mean that people are to jog on as well as they can together: but what do you require in the shape of a promise?"

"I require your assurance that you will for ever renounce all idea of a son-in-law as far as Sir Foster Kerrison is concerned."

"Do you know, love, I see the hand of Boscawen in your determined dislike of Kerrison. That man has enormous influence with you; and when he married a woman young enough to be his granddaughter, it ought to have silenced him upon the subject of matrimony. Lady Ennismore has heard my reasons in favour of Sir Foster, and it was but yesterday I was speaking upon the subject with her ladyship. Lady Ennismore has returned in high feather from Bedinfield, my love, and looks nearly as young as Julia; does she not? She assured me Thursday would be the brightest day in her calendar of pleasures. I am sure it will be a day of proud delight to me!"

"I will not allow you to include Sir Foster Kerrison in the bridal party, Gertrude. I wish you to understand that I object to every species of intimacy with the Ripley family."

"My dear John, why did you not express your wishes earlier? I have indeed asked that pretty, cheerful creature, Lucy Kerrison, to spend a few days with Clara when she loses her sisters, and I felt obliged to include her father

in the wedding arrangements. I am sorry your odd ways of thinking prevent so many agreeable circumstances from becoming valued, but so it is, and I cannot decline Sir Foster's society without a cogent reason to apologise for my change of manner."

"I only object to the man on Clara's account," replied Sir John, considerably annoyed at the intelligence.

"What nonsense, Sir John! Do I insist upon the girl's falling in love, or do I lay violent hands upon the owner of Ripley?"

"Not exactly, Gertrude, but I object to your eternal plans and manœuvres, which tend to the same effect."

Lady Wetheral kissed her hand playfully.

"Avaunt such notions! A mother is a very different being from a father. One is all tenderness and anxiety for the future; the other dreams heavily, and not always wisely, over the present. Look at Chrystal there, sitting bolt upright, with her hair in such masses, and her throat covered up like the picture of Heloise. You find her necessary to your amusement now, but you are blind to her future advantage. Who will ask for a wife from the alarming precincts of your book-room? Who will care to please a girl brought

up among authors, full of self-importance, and whose conversation will preclude her from pleasing others?"

"Christobelle is a very agreeable companion," was her father's reply.

"She will do for old Lesley's nephew, perhaps," observed her ladyship, listlessly. "Kerrison says they have got him into Dundonald's ship."

A short silence ensued, and Lady Wetheral quitted the room, unshackled by any definite promise upon the subject of Sir Foster Kerrison. Sir John sank again into tranquil employments, satisfied that his sentiments were made known, and that henceforth, when the bustle of the double marriage should subside, the tide of gaiety would ebb, and Wetheral Castle become a scene of calm and domestic cheerfulness. Then all this communication with Ripley must terminate, and Clara would not be subjected to the constant society of Sir Foster Kerrison. This happy vision lulled Sir John Wetheral into present security, and his mind dismissed the subject from its consideration.

Nothing could exceed Isabel's delight at the daily party which met in the splendid dinner-room at Wetheral. Nothing could be more

delightful to her imagination than the scene which presented itself to her view each day after the fatigues and annoyance of a long morning passed in her husband's dressing-room. When the six o'clock bell rang in the assembled guests, and warned them to their toilette, Isabel emerged from her labours, and, with the wild delight of a girl emancipated from a boarding-school, she flew to her room and prepared for the exquisite amusement of the evening. It is true, she was constrained to enter the drawing-room leaning discreetly upon her husband's arm, and his tall figure hovering round her chair, checked for a time the exuberance of her spirits, by his close and anxious watchfulness; but her eyes feasted upon the countenance and dress of those around her. Compared with Brierly, this alone was happiness. She looked beamingly upon her sisters, and complacently at the gentlemen, who were so soon to carry them from her sight. She never tired of watching Miss Wycherly, and her beau, Charles Spottiswoode; the former delighting her with the oddity of her remarks, and the latter full of agreeable entertainment.

Wholly wrapt up in the bustle of the scene, Isabel forgot the plodding disquietude of the morning, and utter oblivion closed over the

studies which Mr. Boscawen vainly hoped would reach her taste and improve her mind: her soul was dedicated only to simple subjects, and the warm-hearted Isabel acknowledged no desire beyond the delight of seeing happy faces and hearing kind remarks. Life to her was a blank, if it brought other sounds than affectionate greetings, or produced other objects than smiling, well-dressed individuals.

During dinner, Isabel's eyes feasted silently upon her friends; but when the ladies rose to quit the dinner-room, and her spirit became disenthralled by the door closing upon Mr. Boscawen, then did her speech burst its enclosure, and revel in unrestrained freedom. The day preceding the nuptial morning Isabel was in very high spirits, almost as unsubdued as in the days of her singlehood: even Mr. Boscawen could scarcely repel the vivacity of her remarks, though he stood tall and grim before her, his dark eyes fixed upon her face, and his strongly marked eyebrows lowering at the rapid remarks which passed her lips. *Gaieté de cœur* played in her eyes that evening, in spite of her silent, stern-looking attendant; and, when the ladies withdrew, Isabel caught Miss Wycherly's arm in their progress to the drawing-room.

"Oh, my dear Miss Wycherly, now I've got away from Mr. Boscawen, I have so much to say, and I must say it all before he leaves the dining-room, you know! Well, how beautiful Lady Ennismore looks, and what a lovely ornament in her hair! I wish Mr. Boscawen would let me wear ornaments! I have been teasing him to allow me to wear a feather to-morrow-morning, but he replies in some unaccountable language, which I suppose means 'no.' I want to ask the girls if they are frightened about to-morrow: I was not a bit alarmed. If I had known, though, how little I was to be mistress of Brierly, I would not have married."

Isabel flew to her sisters, on reaching the drawing-room, without waiting any reply from Miss Wycherly.

"Now, I want to know if either of you feel frightened. I only laughed, if you remember. Lady Ennismore, won't Julia be very happy?"

"I trust so," replied her ladyship, smiling, and obligingly pressing Julia's hand between her's. "My daughter will repose on flowers, if a wish of mine has power to confer such a destiny."

Julia turned her head towards Lady Ennis-

more; joy and affection sparkled in her eye, but she did not speak.

"Ah, you are so charming, dear Lady Ennismore," exclaimed Isabel — "how I wish Mr. Boscawen would make *me* repose on roses, and leave that horrid "Universal History," which puzzles me to death. I don't think you are in spirits, my dear Anna Maria; but you need not be afraid of Tom Pynsent, I'm sure — he was the very best partner I ever had. I'm sure Tom will spoil you. He allowed me always to call the same country dance, though I know he would have preferred any other. *You* need not fear, my dear Anna Maria. I shall ask Mrs. Pynsent, to-morrow, if any body need fear dear Tom. Oh, Miss Wycherly, that is the very sweetest comb I ever saw — and my blue silk looks so dowdy by the side of your darling dress, Miss Spottiswoode!"

Lady Wetheral approached Isabel, and complimented her upon her improved looks during her stay at Wetheral.

"Oh, do you think so, mamma? I know I wish I was not in the family way, for I *must* be confined at Brierly, Mr. Boscawen says; and the place is so large and dull.—Anna Maria, I wish I was going to Paris with you—any where,

to get out of Miss Tabitha's way. Oh, Julia, I hope you won't be in the family way soon, for it is terrible to be such a size, and your figure is so lovely."

"Ring for coffee, Chrystal," said Lady Wetheral, in gentle tones, but suffering acutely under the laugh which was raised by Isabel's speech.

"Oh, don't ring for coffee, yet," cried Isabel. "I have so much to say, and Mr. Boscawen will leave the dining-room if he hears a bell.—No, don't order coffee, yet. Clara, I must not utter Sir Foster's name, because Mr. Boscawen tells me not; but I think I know whose wedding will be next. I saw him in the avenue to-day! ah ha!—I really think you are too handsome for Sir Foster — now I am going to make a match for dear Chrystal."

So ran on the happy, gay-hearted Isabel, perfectly blind to Lady Wetheral's agony of mind, and her efforts to turn the conversation into other hands. Miss Spottiswoode and Miss Wycherly encouraged Isabel's ingenuous and indiscreet powers of chat.

"Chrystal," repeated her ladyship, "I am pining for coffee."

"No, no, I vow you shall not approach the

bell," cried Isabel, arresting Christobelle's hand as she prepared to obey the hint. "My dear mamma, don't be thirsty yet, I have so much to say. Do you know I have only recovered my old spirits within these four days, and they will expire again the moment I set off for Brierly. If you ring for coffee, Mr. Boscawen will rise up before me like Samuel at the Witch of Endor's call, which I read this morning to him."

"Do you really read a chapter every morning, besides studying arts and sciences?" asked Miss Wycherly, seating herself on a stool beside Isabel. "Now, girls, form a circle, and listen to Mrs. Boscawen's prospectus of married education."

"Prospectus!" replied Isabel, laughing—"Heaven knows what that is; but, now you are all listening, I will tell you every thing. What merry faces! I wish Mr. Boscawen would let me fill Brierly with such faces, and allow us to scamper over the park and feed the deer. I got old John, one day, to—"

"Who is old John?" said Miss Spottiswoode, who formed the centre of the circle.

"The butler, my dear, the old butler.—I wish Mr. Boscawen would let me do exactly as I like. Ah, Julia, Lord Ennismore is not so old as Mr.

Boscawen, so he will be so good-natured!—As to dear Tom Pynsent, I know he will let Anna Maria dance from morning till night. Mr. Boscawen says married women cannot be too grave, but he never told me so till I was married. Mr. Boscawen loves Chrystal; that's one thing, therefore, she will return with us to that horrible Brierly. Mamma, we are going to run away with Chrystal."

"Are you, Mrs. Boscawen?" Her ladyship spoke languidly, as though she was resigned to the endurance of all evils, till her son-in-law should appear.

"Oh yes. Mr. Boscawen told me he should take away my sister Chrys. She is twelve years old, now; quite a companion, he says, for me, if I ever have half her application—that, I'm sure, I never shall have. Old John told me—"

The door opened and disclosed the gaunt figure of Mr. Boscawen, approaching in the dignity of extreme height, and large, bushy eyebrows. He walked slowly and silently towards his young wife, and stationed himself at the back of her chair. Isabel became mute.

"You are early, Mr. Boscawen," observed Lady Spottiswoode. "We were in the first burst of remarks sacred to our sex."

"Make me a participator," he replied, smiling.

"Never," replied Miss Wycherly. "We have too much freemasonry to admit you behind the scenes"

"My wife hears no conversation, Miss Wycherly, which her husband may not share, I presume?"

"La, Mr. Boscawen," eagerly exclaimed Isabel, turning to her husband, "you don't like nonsense, and we talk nothing else."

"I am sorry to hear you confess such folly and wickedness, my love," replied Mr. Boscawen. "I had hoped better things."

"Well, Mr. Boscawen, I don't mean exactly nonsense. I don't mean what *you* mean by nonsense. I only mean, we—we—"

"What do you really mean, Isabel?" Mr. Boscawen took her hand kindly, and meant evidently to be playful, but it was the donkey attempting to imitate the lapdog. Isabel coloured, and withdrew her hand in alarm. Her husband's shaggy brows concealed the kindly expression of his eye, as it rested upon her face.

"I am sure I don't know, Mr. Boscawen, what I mean. I don't think I ever mean any thing."

Mr. Boscawen made no reply, but resumed

his position behind Isabel's chair. An awkward pause was agreeably relieved by the entrance of coffee, and shortly afterwards the gentlemen entered from the dining-room. Tom Pynsent flew to Anna Maria, as usual. Lord Ennismore seated himself by the side of his mother.

"Lord," cried Mrs. Pynsent to Lady Spottiswoode, "I can't find out a single good quality in that fellow, Ennismore, to attract a girl like Julia Wetheral. If the poor monkey hasn't popped himself down by his mother, instead of his bride. Look at my Tom, now! See how he rattles and coos to his dove! Why, my poor Bobby was not such a honey lover as this Ennismore; and Bobby, you know, would not set the Thames on fire."

Sir John sat between Anna Maria and Julia, in silence; he listened with pleased attention to Tom Pynsent, who was dilating upon the comforts he had prepared for his young wife's travelling mania.

"God knows what sort of a figure I shall cut," he remarked, in his usual stentorian tone of voice. "I can't fancy much hunting or good shooting among such thin, whey-faced chaps as the French; and, as to dogs, *they* can know nothing by being spoken to in such a language. I

can't speak a word of French, and Anna Maria is as wise as myself. I haven't a notion how we shall get on, but, if my little girl is pleased, I am content. A man should please his wife, you know, or he must be a brute. I wish the Ennismores would join us. Ennismore, my lad, here, come this way—it is not too late now to change your mind and join us in Paris."

Lord Ennismore rose and joined the party, who had grouped round Sir John and his daughters. Lady Ennismore followed her son, and placed her arm carelessly within his. Tom Pynsent repeated his observation, and Julia gave her bridegroom a beseeching look, which was observed by Miss Wycherly. Lady Ennismore answered Tom Pynsent's appeal, with her sweetest smile.

"I almost wish we were going *en masse*, my dear friends, to enjoy your delightful visit to Paris. I almost wish the Bedinfield property was situated on the banks of the Loire, to be able to snatch moments at the French capital. My dear Julia will be so occupied in her new domain, she will not have leisure to sigh for other scenes; and I must bask a while in her happiness, before I can allow myself to imagine I am a dowager, and free to roam about."

"Perhaps *we* will go with you!" exclaimed Isabel, in a moment of excitation, forgetful of Brierly, of her situation, and of her husband's tastes. "Mr. Boscawen, I should so like to go abroad!—Mr. Boscawen, do let us join Tom and Anna Maria!—I should so love to go to a place where I could not speak a word of the language—to see people stare and eat nasty frogs!"

"My dear Isabel!" said her husband, pressing his hand upon her shoulder, in token of his wish she should remain silent.

"Well, Tom Pynsent said so, Mr. Boscawen! didn't you, Tom?—didn't you say they eat frogs, and snails, and things alive?"

Mr. Boscawen never hazarded a reply to provoke fresh rejoinders—he only alluded to Isabel's state of health, which he feared might suffer from late hours, and in a tone of voice, soft, yet decided—a tone which Isabel never dared to resist—he offered his arm, and counselled her to retire for the night.

"Another hour for Mrs. Boscawen—let me pray for one hour only," said Mr. Charles Spottiswoode—"this will be our last general meeting!"

"My wife's health is of great consequence to her friends," replied Mr. Boscawen, mildly, as

Isabel rose in dismay. "I must attend to my wife."

"Oh, indeed I am very well in health, Mr. Boscawen, though I am rather heavy to look at. Mrs. Tollemache was much larger than I am, when she danced a reel, wasn't she, Miss Wycherly?"

Mr. Boscawen was deaf and dumb, upon principle, whenever Isabel began to converse. He led his wife to her mother, in silence, to pay her retiring compliments, and Christobelle accompanied them in their transit. When Isabel was deposited in her room, Mr. Boscawen began the evening lecture.

"Isabel, you shock me to death with your ignorance and indelicacy."

"I'm sure I was not indelicate, Mr. Boscawen. You are always finding fault, now I am married to you," sobbed Isabel.

"My love, you should not allude to your situation before gentlemen, or name Mrs. Tollemache in that extraordinary way."

"Well, I did not know there was any harm, Mr. Boscawen! I declare I wish I was not in any situation at all, for you carry me away from every pleasant amusement, and it makes this place as dull as Brierly."

"I am sorry you weep, my love, and find Brierly so dull. I hoped you would be happy here, at least, yet you hurt me by complaining and tears. My dear Isabel, don't be so childish."

"Well, I *am* a child, Mr. Boscawen. I'm only eighteen, next Sunday."

"I cannot bear to see you weep, Isabel;" and Mr. Boscawen hung tenderly over his wayward wife. "You will do yourself an injury."

Isabel had sufficient acuteness or instinct to perceive the source of her temporary power, and she employed the moment to advantage. Her sobs increased in vehemence.

"I only wished to—to wear—one little white feather—at my sister's wedding to-morrow—and you refused me, Mr. Boscawen."

"Did I, Isabel? Cease this sobbing, and you shall have the feather; do, my love. You shall wear a plume, only be tranquil; as many feathers as you please, Isabel, only cease weeping." Mr. Boscawen drew his sobbing wife upon his knee, and fondled her, like an infant in the arms of its nurse.

"I only wish for two feathers, Mr. Boscawen; one to play easily, and a long thing to droop."

"You shall have them, Isabel; now lay down your little head on my shoulder."

Isabel sank upon her husband's shoulder like a wayward child fatigued with its own efforts; her sobbing gradually subsided, and a low murmuring noise succeeded, which again softened into sighs. Christobelle quitted the Boscawens to return into the drawing-room. Isabel had gained her point, and the feather was won.

How Christobelle's young heart gloried in the scene which presented itself to her view the eventful morning of her sister's marriage! A large and well-dressed company filled the great drawing-room to overflowing; and Christobelle's eye traversed the apartment, resting upon each group, as they offered themselves to her attention. She saw Anna Maria pale as when her heart pined under love unrequited, hanging upon her father's arm, while her lover stood near her, even more red-faced and happy than in his day of acceptance. Julia sat composed between her bridesmaids, Miss Wycherly and Miss Spottiswoode. Lady Ennismore was standing immediately behind her, leaning on her son's arm. Isabel, bright and sparkling, was closely attended by Mr. Boscawen; the plume so long coveted, waving gracefully in her blue silk hat. Mrs. Pynsent was there, full of happy importance, evidently taking command of all proceedings,

and untired with gazing upon Tom, her only son, now on the point of leaving England, full dressed for his journey—large, loud, and good-looking. The Tyndals were grouped with the Kerrisons and Clara. Sir Foster stood silent and absent, winking his left eye with a nervous motion, which produced an extraordinary effect.

Lady Wetheral glided among her guests with an ease and grace of manner truly bewitching. No one could have supposed her heart was swelling with triumph at the events which were shortly to deprive her of the society of two children, or that her present attention was deeply fixed upon Clara and Sir Foster Kerrison. Every turn of the baronet's countenance was eagerly noted by her acute eye; and though, to common observers, Sir Foster was looking stupidly before him, winking his eye, and tapping his leg with a cane, her keen perception drew conclusions from impossible things, and it added increased graciousness to her insinuating manners.

Far less satisfied was Sir John Wetheral's mind, as he glanced from Tom Pynsent to the effeminate figure of Lord Ennismore, and thought of Julia's futurity with a man whose mind appeared to be as imbecile as his person was unmanly. Christobelle could trace his thoughts in

the expression of his eyes, now gazing with pleasure upon Anna Maria, and anon resting mournfully on his beautiful Julia. Christobelle was too young to sorrow with him, or understand the deep feeling of his mind; but the remembrance of his expressive emotions often came over her in after-life, when experience had enlightened her in suffering, and when the bitter pangs of parental disappointment were more clearly understood.

There was a pause of some moments, after the general hum of a first meeting had subsided, as though all parties awaited a summons to the chapel, which in Wetheral Castle still remained untouched by the hand of time, since the days of the seventh Henry. It was a large, and generally well-filled pile of building, many of the nearer neighbours preferring to attend Wetheral Castle for its accommodation in point of distance, and perhaps with reference to the gay luncheons which awaited their return into the great hall. The deep silence was broken by Mrs. Pynsent.

"Here, hallo! what are we waiting for? John Tyndal has been in his canonicals this half hour. Now, Sir John Wetheral, will you lead Anna Maria? Tom, you be hanged; not so fast,

stupy; take Miss Spottiswoode. There you go! Hoy, Charley Spottiswoode, leave Pen, and trot by the side of Mistress Boscawen."

"My wife is under my own charge, thank you," said Mr. Boscawen, bowing smilingly to Mrs. Pynsent.

"Lord, what an ass! Here, Sir Foster, you have tapped a hole in your trowsers with that cane; do move on with Clara Wetheral; she is Anna Maria's bridesmaid. Don't keep humming a tune, my good fellow—get on."

Sir Foster passed on as he was directed, but he took no notice of Mrs. Pynsent's address. He went forward, humming an air, and winking his eye. Clara leaned upon his arm, in white muslin and satin. Never had she looked so very handsome. Perhaps Sir Foster operated as an excitement to her powers of captivation. If a woman could charm Sir Foster Kerrison, she might animate an image of clay; but Clara liked to be spurred on by difficulties.

Tom Pynsent's hunting propensities lay fresh and green at his heart, in spite of circumstance, and a bouquet of geraniums, which bloomed in the button-hole of his coat; for, perceiving Christobelle following the train without a partner, he turned good-humouredly to Henry Tyndal, and called out,—

"Whip in the tail-hound, Harry, and take her to kennel." Christobelle was accordingly escorted into the chapel by Henry Tyndal.

The ceremony ended, which gave Anna Maria for ever to Tom Pynsent, and Julia was saluted Lady Ennismore. Lady Wetheral had reached the summit of her wishes. Which ever way her eye directed its glance, there was glory and triumph. Her two eldest daughters were become head-stones in the county, and Clara was stationed by the side of Sir Foster Kerrison. Could all these things be?

A magnificent breakfast awaited the nuptial *cortège*, but Sir John Wetheral would not appear at the crowded tables; he retired to his study after the ceremony had concluded, desiring to take leave of his children in the privacy of his own place of refuge. Christobelle remained with him during the *déjeûné*, and Mr. Boscawen was deputed to take his place in the scene of festivity.

Anna Maria appeared in a quarter of an hour, to receive her father's blessing ere she quitted his roof for some months, and his paternal care for ever. Her father kissed her glowing cheek, and bade her depart in peace. "You have mar-

ried a good man, and a religious man, my dear child; therefore you will be free from the stings of reproach. The trials of life must fall to your share, but there is one who will kindly share your troubles, and watch over you." He turned to Tom Pynsent. "I give you my child with great satisfaction and pride. I give her to you innocent and good; bring her home untainted by the vices of a foreign land." Anna Maria bent her knee, and received her father's blessing with streaming eyes. She was hurried from his arms into the travelling-carriage which was to convey them to the coast. The gentlemen were all assembled, examining its form and workmanship: but she was silently assisted into her new equipage by her brother-in-law and Mr. Wycherly. They respected her emotion, and forbore to increase it by addressing one word of compliment. Tom Pynsent followed, but his progress was arrested by the solicitude of his mother, who had rushed to the door to look once more upon the athletic form of her beloved son. Recollections of long-past days of parental solicitude overwhelmed Mrs. Pynsent's heart, and produced a flood of tears as she whimpered forth, "I say, Tom."

Tom advanced, and shook hands for the third

time, besides offering every filial consolation over again.

"Steady now, mother — steady: go it at a hand-canter, and don't be disheartened. Take care of my father, and see to the dogs and colts. Let John Ball exercise Longshanks, and look well to the mare. We shall be back to Pen's wedding."

"Come, none of your jibes, you rascal," cried Mrs. Pynsent, smiling through her tears; "how could I guess who Pen cared for, with her wiffering manners? Well, I will look after your concerns, Tom, but how shall I get on with only Bobby? When will you be home, Tom, and when shall I see you again in Shropshire, and what will become of me till you come back? You are leaving your parents when they most want you, Tom." Mrs. Pynsent's grief became audible; and Mr. Wycherly, waiving his nephew into the carriage, endeavoured to lead his sister from the spot.

"It's no use, Bill; you'll never get me away till I have seen the last of my Tom. Anna Maria, take care of Tom, and bring him safe back."

The carriage rolled away, and Mrs. Pynsent

gazed till a turn in the avenue concealed it from her sight; she turned to Mr. Wycherly.

"Take me away now, Bill, and don't speak a word. Put me into my coach, and send Bobby, for I'm done up."

Mr. Wycherly did all and every thing his sister could wish. She was conducted to her "coach," as she always designated the phaeton, weeping violently, and "Bobby" took his place by her side without offering a remark, or hazarding a word of consolation. The Hatton carriage drove off, but poor Mrs. Pynsent's sobs were heard distinctly for some time above the tramp of the horses' feet, as they paced down the green turf of the avenue.

The Bedinfield carriages now drew to the door, and Julia was to depart to another home, as her sister had done before her; but though her destiny appeared more brilliant, though all earthly advantages conspired to render her fate even more envied and enviable than that of Mrs. Tom Pynsent, there was a mournful silence among her friends, and the voice of congratulation sounded low and melancholy.

Smiles and happy prophecy had gladdened Anna Maria's departure; but no one ventured to say that Julia had won a matrimonial prize.

No one could confess their heart was not heavy when they saw that young blooming girl led away by Lord and Lady Ennismore—a peeress and a bride. Miss Wycherly sprung towards her friend as she bade them adieu, and burst into tears. "Julia," she said, in a serious and touching tone, "you appear beyond earthly assistance —far beyond human cares; yet we know not what is to be. Julia, in weal or woe, in evil report or good report, Lidham and its inmates are yours for ever."

"Amen," responded Charles Spottiswoode.

Julia paused, struck by the solemn tone of her friend's affectionate speech: her lip quivered, and the colour fled from her cheek.

"Penelope, I know you love me, and I hope our meetings will ever be in undisturbed and happy friendship, but your manner is foreboding of evil."

"I have a pain at my heart, Julia," replied Miss Wycherly, pressing her hand upon her bosom; "but it will pass away. I have a severe pain *here*, but I trust it will never visit your warm heart. Julia, may you be the happiest of the happy! but, in all changes, remember Penelope Wycherly, whom you served in her need."

Miss Wycherly threw her arms round Julia,

and the two friends embraced in silence. Lady Ennismore interfered.

"This is a sad specimen of congratulation, my dear Miss Wycherly, and my daughter will be made ill by these agreeable, but hurtful phrases. Ennismore, lead your bride to her father; and we will take possession of our jewel, lest melancholy faces dispirit her mind. Lady Wetheral, I believe we are now preparing to carry away our darling."

Lady Wetheral's eyes sparkled with more than triumphant delight, as Julia was led into her father's study; she followed mechanically in the wake of the two Lady Ennismores, and her step sounded proudly as she remembered that her daughter now was numbered among the great ones of the land. Sir John only considered that his child was the wife of a man he could not love, and the daughter-in-law of a woman he did not esteem. The full tide of affection rushed to his heart, but became unutterable from his lips. He could only press Julia to his bosom; he could not tell her, his mind was happy in the prospect which was before her, but he bade God bless her in spirit, and his embrace spoke volumes.

Miss Wycherly did not intrude upon the

sacred scene; but she was stationed in the hall to gaze upon her friend, and watch her movements. Charles Spottiswoode stood near her, but his accents of kind and fond interest were unheeded by Penelope. As Julia emerged from the library, and proceeded towards the hall-door with her new relations, her mother and the Boscawens, Miss Wycherly fixed her eyes upon her friend's pale countenance, and exclaimed, "Julia, you are going; remember my last words, my own dear friend—in all changes, remember me and mine!"

Julia was speechless, but she extended her hand, which Penelope covered with kisses, and resigned with reluctance to Lord Ennismore. "There, my lord," she exclaimed with energy, "take my friend, since it must be so, but you will not love her as I do, or understand her warm heart as I prize it! I shall be ever with you, Julia, in spirit, and my friendship shall be a buckler in time of need. Farewell, my own dear friend!"

Miss Wycherly left the hall, and watched Julia's departure through a window more retired from observation. There was only Charles Spottiswoode to listen, and to him her lamentation was addressed. She told her lover all her

fears and all her thoughts respecting Julia's marriage; the melancholy idea took possession of her mind, that Lord Ennismore was unsuited to her friend's character, and, though there was nothing tangible in his lordship's behaviour to elicit a strong objection, there was a decided difference in his character, a manner totally opposed to the character and kindly bearing of her cousin Tom, which must affect every body's mind and opinions. She had an ominous foreboding that Julia would be unhappy, and never would she marry Charles Spottiswoode, unless he would swear, under all reports, under all circumstances, to receive Julia Wetheral at Lidham; yes, though she became a worthless thing, poor, miserable, and contemptible. "Swear it to me, Charles," she cried, "swear it now, ere the carriage-door closes on my friend, and carries her from my sight!"

"I do, Penelope," replied Spottiswoode, kindly. "Lady Ennismore will find me her warm friend in every trial; but, why are you so fearful and foreboding *now?* Why do your fears gain such influence and mastery at this moment of time, when her heart is calm, and *his* affection is undisputed?"

"God help me, Charles! but, as Julia came

from the library just now, she looked like a lamb led to the slaughter. Did you read the expression of Lady Ennismore, the mother's eyes?"

"I did not observe her. I was watching *your* eyes, Penelope."

Miss Wycherly heeded not the words which at another time would have soothed and pleased; she became restless as Julia lingered on the steps with her mother, and her desire was to see Julia once more before she quitted Wetheral, to embrace her yet again, and repeat offers of kindness, which must be totally useless to Lady Ennismore, though they relieved her heart to utter them. Charles Spottiswoode urged her to remain, and avoid giving renewed pain to her friend, who had felt evidently struck by the ominous farewell; but Miss Wycherly would hear no objection to her anxiety. She advanced hurriedly to the door, but Charles stood before her, playfully holding her hands, and entreating her to resume her seat. The little strife of lovers did not last many moments; the sound of carriage-wheels caused Miss Wycherly to rush past her companion, and enter the hall. Julia was gone.

CHAPTER XI.

The gaiety of Wetheral was not much interrupted by the marriage of its most influential members. Lady Wetheral lamented the loss of her daughters, and often in public alluded to her solitary hours of grief; but she was indefatigable in her efforts to amuse Miss Kerrison and Clara; and, though her lips breathed sorrowful words, her eyes and attention exclusively belonged to Sir Foster Kerrison. Her ladyship laboured to maintain "that no passion could be more selfish than sorrow," and she took credit to herself, "that, in despite of low and sad feelings which prompted her to remain at Wetheral in silent meditation, *she* had never given way to her wishes. Indeed, she felt the claims of others upon her time and attention; and, though her heart did hope Clara might remain single for some years, to be her companion, yet it was her

duty to chaperone her to the amusements which her youth expected, and, perhaps, required. All young people loved vivacity, and, though some parents forgot the days of their own youth, and checked the happy views of their children, *she* would not shrink from a mother's duty." With these impressions of "duty," Lady Wetheral was fully employed in escorting Clara and her young companion to every public amusement; and Wetheral still continued the scene of festivity, and the arena of matchmaking, as it had ever been, since the day Mrs. Tom Pynsent made her *début* in public.

However easily the taste of young men might bend to Lady Wetheral's flattering lips, combined with her daughter's attractions, there was some cleverness required in guiding Sir Foster Kerrison to the desired point. His silent manner, and provoking absence of mind, perpetually defeated the mother's purposes, but her spirit rose superior to all annoyances. "It might and would take time to throw fetters upon a man who forgot every word or engagement of the previous half-hour, but perseverance must level every impediment. Clara was very young, and patience must be severely taxed, if people were resolved to carry a favourite wish into opera-

tion." Clara had not such a provision of that precious gift as her mother possessed, and it required constant watchfulness on her part to subdue the appearance of irritability before the object of her wishes. Her mother, too, watched over the unquiet spirit, and diverted its attention in the time of need. One day, Clara became impetuous upon the subject. Sir Foster never called at Wetheral without a special invitation; and how was she to manage a great, stupid creature, who neither saw nor felt attentions? Lady Wetheral smiled.

"My dear girl, patience! Sir Foster must be managed, and if you will only leave the affair in my hands, all will be well. Do not, I beseech you, look so very cross: the sight of temper drives away all men who are not actually in love, and perpetual good-humour is a perpetual attraction."

"How can I keep any temper with such a heavy mass of human nature?" exclaimed Clara, scornfully.

"Don't call names, my love; I am going to tell you. Do not give yourself any trouble, only look pleased and pleasantly at Sir Foster; I will effect the rest. Some men are rather dull, but absence of mind requires skill only in the

parties concerned. I do not think Sir Foster dull; absent only — very absent; but perhaps that my operate in our favour."

"In what way?" asked Clara, inquisitively.

"Never mind, my love, look pleasantly at Sir Foster, and leave the minutiæ to me. We must lead him gently and gradually to make Wetheral a daily resting-place; and while Lucy is here, it can be done. Pray, Clara, endeavour to check your temper before Lucy. I should not wish her to report unfavourably of your manners at Ripley; so *much* depends upon your trying to appear good-humoured—do, my love."

With evident painful effort, Clara did manage to conceal her irritable nature from the particular observation of her friend Miss Kerrison, who was the main spring of that machinery which was to involve her father. To Lucy Kerrison Lady Wetheral directed the most flattering attentions, and offered the most agreeable series of parties of pleasure; to her young and unsuspicious ear was consigned every compliment which could lull observation, awaken her love, and interest her in all Lady Wetheral's actions. In short, a separation from Clara and the delights of Wetheral was becoming unbearable to the heart and imagination of poor Miss

Kerrison, and her eyes filled with tears of real sorrow, soon made apparent to her ladyship's quick apprehension, the regret with which her young guest contemplated a return to Ripley. This was, to use her favourite expression, "all in their favour;" and she mentioned the circumstance to Sir John in her own way.

"This poor, dear Lucy Kerrison, my love, is sadly overcome at the thoughts of leaving us. Clara and herself are exceedingly attached; the tears rush to her eyes whenever the subject is alluded to."

"Miss Kerrison is a ladylike, nice girl," replied Sir John.

"Yes, my love, she is quite the companion Clara should have. I approve her good and judicious selection. I wish they may often meet."

Sir John did not reply, and a short pause succeeded.

"I could almost wish Lucy was going to remain with us for Clara's sake. If I thought Sir Foster would not object, I would request him not to recall her."

"Isabel is still with us, Gertrude; Clara has her two sisters."

"Yes—to be sure — oh, yes, Mrs. Boscawen

is here, but she is never visible till the half-hour bell rings. I see very little of poor Isabel myself, and Clara still less. Bell is shut up, too, in the schoolroom, learning to be over-wise and disagreeable; besides, my love, Bell can be no companion to Clara. I wonder Sir Foster does not call to see his daughter! do you know, my love, he has been but once within this fortnight to see us."

"His company is not particularly acceptable, Gertrude."

"Well, Sir John, I only name the circumstance—I am afraid we are not very attractive; however, my love, I will try to extend Miss Kerrison's leave of absence for Clara's sake."

"Do as you please, my only objection is to her father being obliged to marry Clara. I have nothing to produce against his pretty, elegant daughter: don't let Kerrison marry a daughter of mine, and I shall not interfere in your plans."

"Oh! my love, I never compel men to marry. I hope my dear Clara will be my companion for some years. I feel very keenly my dear Lady Ennismore's loss, and so I do poor Mrs. Pynsent."

"Why is Anna Maria 'poor,' Gertrude?—she has married a good man, and a man she likes."

"She is in a manner banished Hatton," re-

plied Lady Wetheral, sighing; "I cannot think her happy while she roves about plain Mrs. Pynsent, no style—at least, not the Hatton style—no proper establishment, no home, like Lady Ennismore, who drove off to Bedinfield, like the wife of a nobleman—liveries, carriage — all magnificent! How I long to see Julia in her glory."

Sir John could offer no counsel which might check the eager delight his lady felt towards the good things of the earth; he therefore resumed his book, and her ladyship wrote, privately, a most polite billet to Sir Foster, upon the strength of her husband's concurrence in her wish to detain his daughter at Wetheral.

"My dear sir,

"It will break all our hearts to part with your lovely Lucy, and Clara suffers so much in the idea of parting with her friend, that we have a proposal to make. I will not tell you at this moment its nature, because I wish to see you. Ladies, my dear sir, prefer speaking to principals. May I hope to see you at Wetheral to-morrow morning?

"Yours truly,

"G. WETHERAL."

Clara feared Sir Foster would withstand the invitation, so blandly expressed, by forgetting

its existence ; but her mother conceived the ambiguity of its expression would raise a germ of curiosity in his mind, which even the inveterate disorder of his brain might not subdue. The wording of the note was talked over before Isabel, and explained to her. Mrs. Boscawen could only entreat Clara not to marry so old a man.

"My dear Clara, Sir Foster will put you into a schoolroom, as Mr. Boscawen has done by me, for old men are alike, I dare say. I assure you, it will be a shocking affair, and I can't give my consent unless you insist upon it. I can't imagine any body marrying an old man, and going to their studies as if they were schoolgirls. Pray take warning by me, Clara, and don't marry Sir Foster."

"My dear Isabel, I am resolved to make the man propose to me. Mamma says I shall lose caste if I am single, for Anna Maria did not marry till she was nineteen, and almost past hope. If I don't take immediately, I shall become *passé ;* for mamma says my style of beauty ought to take effect at once."

"You are very handsome, certainly, dear Clara—very handsome. Mr. Boscawen says you are a very beautiful girl."

"Well," replied Clara, smiling complacently,

"I must be up and be doing. Sir Foster is very rich."

"Oh! Clara, and so is Mr. Boscawen: but I never have any money. Once Mr. Boscawen gave me a guinea, and then took it back again because I would not keep an account of all I spent. I bought a shilling's worth of alicampane, and made myself so ill! However, I did not say I had bought it; so, as I could not account for the shilling, I was obliged to relinquish the rest Don't marry an old man, Clara!"

"Sir Foster lets every body spend his money, Isabel."

"Ah, but remember what Mr. Boscawen promised, Clara! I was promised every thing, and got nothing. You don't know how disagreeable it is to be shut up in a morning, reading and translating."

"I shan't read or translate to please Sir Foster," said Clara, with scornful energy. "I marry upon other principles."

"Well, Clara, only try not to marry an old man, for I assure you it is a very unpleasant thing."

"I wonder if Sir Foster *will* call to-morrow, Isabel?"

"Oh, to be sure he will: I am sure I should, if any one asked me."

"Don't name this to Boscawen, Isabel: I don't wish him to know my intentions."

"Certainly not—that is, if I can keep it from him; but he manages to find out all my secrets. However, I will try to keep this all to myself."

So did Mrs. Boscawen resolutely intend; but her secret transpired at the touch of her husband's mental wand. Mr. Boscawen began to talk of returning to Brierly, the very evening of the conversation which had taken place between his lady and Clara, and, after retiring for the night, he mentioned his intention of leaving Wetheral the following week. Isabel clasped her hands in alarm.

"Oh, Mr. Boscawen, not so soon! must we return so very soon?"

"Why not, Isabel? are you afraid of the dulness of Brierly?"

"Yes—no," cried Isabel, "but I want to watch Clara, Mr. Boscawen: I want to observe something."

"What is it all about?" asked Mr. Boscawen. "Is your sister engaged in some speculation, or has your mother decided upon any one whom your sister is decreed to captivate? I think I

have stumbled upon the truth, Isabel, by your countenance."

"How you find things out, Mr. Boscawen!" cried Isabel, blushing and hesitating; "you never allow me to keep a secret."

"Then there *is* one, Isabel. Have the kindness to admit me into the mystery: a wife should have no secrets."

"Well, only promise not to tell," said Isabel, awed by her husband's grave manner and remark, "and I will not keep the secret to myself, though I promised to do so."

"Who required the promise, Isabel?"

Isabel became alarmed, and disclosed the plot upon Sir Foster. Mr. Boscawen listened in silence, and then coolly made his annotations upon the subject.

"When a mother plots for a son-in-law, and her daughter acts upon it, besides implicating a young married sister, under promises of secrecy, it is time to take steps towards withdrawing from such society. I had every intention of leaving Wetheral next week, but now I shall set off to-morrow, at twelve o'clock; therefore, Isabel, give your maid orders accordingly."

Mrs. Boscawen's distress was too violent to be controlled. "Oh, Mr. Boscawen, how can you take

me away to horrible Brierly so suddenly!—how can you frighten me, and threaten to leave Wetheral before our month is quite over! I shall never be confined at all, I'm sure, and Clara will be so angry!" Isabel sat down, overcome with terror.

Mr. Boscawen patiently and kindly explained his line of conduct to his terrified wife. He assured her no notice would be taken of her disclosure, and that no one should suspect the cause of his departure. He expressed his disgust at Clara's conduct, but he was silent upon the abhorrence he conceived to the untired manœuvring of the mother. He trusted Isabel would become attached to Brierly in the course of time; it was a safer home than the infected air of Wetheral; and, after her confinement, if she fancied change of air, he would take her to the sea.

Mr. Boscawen's observations, in some measure, pacified the extreme grief of Isabel; but her night's rest was gone, and she was extremely feverish in the morning, complaining of painful oppression and headache. Mr. Boscawen was fearful his young wife might suffer from the complicated effects of fear and dislike to returning home; but he was resolved in his purpose: nothing now could alter his determination to carry his lady from Wetheral. He announced his intention openly at breakfast, and Lady We-

theral's polite expression of sorrow fell from her lips upon a cold and barren soil: no flowers rose under her gracious shower of compliments.

"My dear Mr. Boscawen, you surprise and grieve me by your resolution: the absence of Isabel and yourself will throw a deep gloom around us."

"I am obliged to you," quietly replied Mr. Boscawen, as he buttered his piece of dry toast.

"Losing three daughters at one fell swoop, is a severe trial," continued her ladyship. "I shall miss my dear Isabel every hour."

Mr. Boscawen deigned no reply; but Isabel, pale and without appetite, sat dissolved in tears, and dared not trust her voice: she feared to displease her husband by any manifestation of grief, but her heart was sinking under the fearful anticipations of Miss Tabitha, and the gloomy routine of Brierly.

"I suppose Sir John is in his study," observed Mr. Boscawen, rising at the conclusion of breakfast.

"Oh, yes, Sir John breakfasts at seven o'clock, when people are, or ought to be, fast asleep. I can't comprehend such ungenial hours and taste. Surely, if breakfast is ended before eleven o'clock, there is sufficient leisure for the affairs of life."

Mr Boscawen's disgust rose to his eyes, and overflowed in the expression of his countenance; but a strong effort subdued the sentence which trembled upon his lips. He rose, and quitted the breakfast-room. When the door closed upon his awful figure, Isabel's misery burst forth: she threw her arms around Clara, who was seated near her, and sobbed violently.

"Oh, mamma, I wish I had never, never married!"

"My dear Mrs. Boscawen," replied her mother, in very soothing accents, "you are not aware of what you say. I am sure you would have been miserable single, and I should have been tormented to death with an unmarried daughter always at my elbow. You are very comfortably and happily married, my love."

"Oh, how can you say so, mamma! I wish I was Chrystal, to sit with papa, and never be obliged to do what I did not like! I wish I was you, Clara, happy and unmarried! I wish I was a bird, or the cat, or any thing but what I am!" Poor Isabel wept freely: she proceeded—"I am going to be shut up with Miss Tabitha and Mr. Boscawen, in that large, gloomy Brierly; I must not laugh, or speak to old John, or see any plea-

sant company. Oh, no one can tell the dullness and frightfulness of Brierly!"

"My dear Isabel, reflect upon matrimony, and tell me who you ever saw perfectly free from care in that state? I consider it a very proper and natural institution, so very properly arranged, and so particularly enforced, that I confess I have no opinion of a woman who does not marry, if all the comforts of life are secured to her. If a woman is protected by a handsome settlement, and those kind of things, she *ought* to marry."

"Do you think so?" said Isabel, languidly.

"I do: I think you married extremely well, and you ought to consider yourself peculiarly fortunate. If Mr. Boscawen is rigid in exacting painful sacrifices from you, remember he was very liberal in making a settlement; there must be trials, my dear children. I am a proof that the happiest matrimony has cares. Your poor father never assisted me in my anxieties about you all: I am certain Lord Ennismore would never have married Julia, if my unwearied efforts had not domesticated him at Wetheral."

"Tom Pynsent will never contradict Anna Maria," said Isabel, as the tears sprang again

to her eyes—"Tom will never wish my sister to read!"

Mr. Boscawen was heard in the hall, giving orders.

"Oh, we are going, mamma; I hear Mr. Boscawen ordering the carriage. I know the tone of his voice in giving that order so well! how my heart beats!" Isabel clung to her mother's arm.

Mr. Boscawen entered, and gave his arm to his pale, trembling wife. "My dear Isabel, I have arranged every thing; you have only your father to visit before you enter the carriage."

His lady appeared ready to faint. "Don't let me see papa! don't let me see papa!" she exclaimed.

"You are agitated, my love," observed her husband, putting his arm round her waist, and speaking kindly. "Do not be flurried, my dear Isabel, you shall see and speak to no one. Clara will be kind enough to tell Sir John how you feel. You tremble very much; try to gain firmness, my love."

Poor Isabel was placed in her carriage, half fainting, without the power to speak or move. Mr. Boscawen was hurt and alarmed for the effects of this agitation upon his lady's health;

but his mind was decided to persevere in removing Isabel. He deputed Clara to explain to her father how much emotion her sister evinced at the thoughts of taking leave; and bowing to Lady Wetheral and Miss Kerrison, Mr. Boscawen took his place by the side of Isabel, whose head reclined against the side of the carriage, nor did she raise it to look her adieus. She appeared too exhausted and sick at heart to make an effort of any kind. How differently she quitted Wetheral upon her nuptial morning!

Sir Foster Kerrison did actually call at Wetheral some hours after the Boscawens' departure. Clara was soothed and flattered, her mother charmed, by the visit. Sir Foster sat silent till he was spoken to.

"My dear sir, this is courteous, indeed," Lady Wetheral began; "I feel much honoured by your polite attention to my wish."

Sir Foster winked his eye and tapped his boot, but he did not seem to comprehend the purport of her ladyship's speech. "Umph, eh?"

"Papa, you received Lady Wetheral's note, of course?" said Miss Kerrison.

"Eh, what?"

"Lady Wetheral's note, papa—the note you received yesterday from Wetheral!"

Sir Foster sat winking, but could not remember any note.

"Oh, papa, you received a note, and I am sure it is in your pocket. Pray, let me look into the recesses of your enormous pockets?"

Miss Kerrison playfully emptied her father's pockets, and Lady Wetheral's note appeared with its seal unbroken, accompanied by sundry letters, straps, nails, and a shoeing horn. Clara's eyes flashed indignation, but her mother's smiled sweetly.

"My dear Sir Foster, I must not complain of your very absent mind, since I only suffer with the rest of the world. Upon my word, this is very amusing! See, my dear Lucy, how entertaining this assemblage of articles promises to be!"

Sir Foster stared, while the ladies laughed over the miscellaneous contents of his pocket. Clara alone sat dignified and offended. Lady Wetheral explained the purport of her note, and begged the company of Miss Kerrison for a longer and indefinite period. Sir Foster hummed an air and tapped his boot during her complimentary and lengthy speech.

"Papa always implies consent when he hums and taps, Lady Wetheral, so that is delight-

fully arranged: but why, papa, did you call here this morning?"

"Where's Boscawen?"

"They have left some hours, to return to Brierly, papa. Did you want to see Mr. Boscawen?"

A smile curled Sir Foster's handsome lip.

"I am sorry Mr. Boscawen is gone then, papa. I suppose you had some horse in view?"

Another smile and tap of the boot.

"I thought so. But, papa, you will never read your letters and notes if I do not return to Ripley; will you?"

Sir Foster winked his eye in silence.

"My dear Lucy," said Lady Wetheral, playfully, "Sir Foster must bring his letters here every morning for your perusal and advice."

"Oh yes, papa, that is an excellent plan; is it not? You must ride over every morning to be searched, and then you will not require my presence at Ripley."

Sir Foster sat two hours without speaking, or appearing to attend to the conversation which took place between his fair companions. He sat in the most complete absence of mind, tapping his boot, which Clara resented by silent looks of contempt. Miss Kerrison was so inti-

mately acquainted with her father's ways that her chat flowed on undisturbed, till the or molu clock struck six ; Miss Kerrison then approached her father.

" Well, papa, it's time for you to return home ; it is six o'clock."

" Eh, umph, what ?"

" You must order your horse, papa, and go to Ripley to dinner."

" Oh, Sir Foster surely will not quit us ; we shall hope for his company at dinner to-day." Lady Wetheral spoke in earnest and bewitching tones.

" No, thank you, dear Lady Wetheral, not to-day. This is papa's way ; he always goes on in this way at some person's house, and I dare say, having once called here, papa will be regularly at Wetheral every day."

Her ladyship's quick perceptions saw the advantage of gaining Sir Foster Kerrison as a daily visitor ; she caught at once the propriety of allowing him to take his own way in the manner and time of his visits : she therefore ceased to pour forth invitations, but, taking at once a comprehensive view of his character and habits, Sir Foster was allowed to depart in the same mechanical form which characterised his

entrance. Clara's indignation almost threatened destruction to her plans. She inveighed against the excessive stolidity of a man who could sit in a fine woman's society, and yet be ignorant of her presence! Such a man as Sir Foster might visit at Wetheral innocently enough, for he had not the use of his senses."

"My dear Clara," argued her mother, "you are wrong in all your conclusions. Sir Foster has peculiar ways, it is true, but I consider them altogether in our favour. I wish him to become a daily visitor, under the idea of seeing Lucy, who assists me most materially without being aware of it. I wish him to sit as stupidly as he pleases, and to come whenever he pleases; only, my dear Clara, don't look so indignant."

"I cannot understand your tactics," said Clara, sharply. "I can't comprehend how stupidity and indifference can be considered in my favour."

"I dare say not, my love; but when you become a mother, these things will explain themselves. Give me a little credit for foresight, I beseech you, in the establishments I procured your sisters. Be patient, and appear calm, Clara, till I have decided yours."

Clara became impatient and offended, which

caused her mother infinite vexation and alarm. She dreaded lest Clara's irritable spirit should transpire even to Lucy Kerrison: she dreaded lest her own web should become unravelled by the very hand she wished to bestow upon Sir Foster. It was necessary to deal very gently and delicately with a disposition like Clara's. She did not possess the gentleness of manner which was so eminent in Anna Maria, or the sprightly sweetness of Lady Ennismore. Her beauty was superior to both sisters, which prepossessed many in her favour; but her wayward and powerful temper was known only in her own home. It was her mother's aim to shield it if possible from observation. Thompson, who had ever played a conspicuous part in the family, was at this time installed into a kind of confidential friend; and to her Lady Wetheral bitterly complained of the fatigue and terror attendant upon her own watchfulness.

"I declare, Thompson, Miss Clara gives me infinitely more trouble than my three eldest daughters combined. I am always fearful of some display of temper occurring in an unfortunate hour to betray her to gentlemen."

"Yes, my lady, that would be sad indeed.

I'm sure I am always boasting of Miss Clara's sweet temper, as far as I am concerned."

"I wish her to be silent and calm in appearance, yet I am ever upon the watch to soften Miss Clara's remarks, and explain away offensive looks. I don't think, Thompson, Miss Clara will marry soon."

"Oh, my lady, I have heard many remarks about Sir Foster Kerrison's attentions at my young ladies' wedding!"

"What remarks, Thompson? what do foolish people say now?" asked her lady, affecting nonchalance.

"People say Sir Foster is not a very talkative gentleman, my lady, but then he stood always close to Miss Clara; I heard too he called this morning; so people put two and two together, as they very well may."

"If people calculate so erroneously, they must expect to be wrong in the sum total," replied her ladyship, smiling and internally pleased at remarks having been uttered; "but we shall see, Thompson."

Miss Kerrison's prediction concerning her father's way of sitting hours in silence at people's houses was verified. Having called at Wetheral to see Mr. Boscawen upon some affair

connected with horses, and having also remained his usual two hours with the ladies, unnoticed and unbored with attentions which required him to talk, Sir Foster Kerrison, on the following morning, again deposited himself at Wetheral, and was allowed, with the tact of a veteran matron, to sit in a lounging chair, tapping his boot, and winking his eye without molestation. Miss Kerrison took an inventory of the stores deposited in his pockets during the first moment of her father's entrance, an employment he never noticed beyond an absent smile; after which ordeal he was consigned to a half-dozing kind of existence, till Miss Kerrison warned him to depart, by assuring him the clock had struck six. Day after day Sir Foster was found regularly installed in the ladies' boudoir at Wetheral, and as regularly did he depart at his daughter's summons.

Had Lady Wetheral rashly urged Sir Foster to dine at the Castle, it would have broken through the habit which impelled him to move backwards and forwards at stated times, and by certain sounds; it might too have drawn him towards new people and other houses. Lucy Kerrison was perfectly right in her suggestion

that, having called by accident, his visits might continue through habit.

There was another advantage attendant upon Sir Foster's morning lounge. Sir John, who rarely appeared out of the precincts of his study, was ignorant of the events which gilded the pleasures of the boudoir. The study was far removed from sights and sounds, and the chapel must be traversed to reach its perfect seclusion. The windows received light from a court, walled round, and closed to curious view by a deep and impervious shrubbery of laurels and evergreen oaks. In this sequestered part of the castle, its master loved to pass his mornings; and how could he suppose his wishes, nay, almost commands, were of non-effect? Sir Foster was not seen at his table — his name was rarely mentioned at Wetheral—no visiting-ticket met his eye—no allusion was made to recent visits on the part of his family—every thing appeared regular and in its usual order. Sir John was, therefore, calm, and almost oblivious to the existence of Sir Foster Kerrison. This was most favourable to his lady's schemes.

For three weeks, consecutively, this order of things continued; and only once, during that period, did Sir John meet Sir Foster within the

domain of Wetheral; which was, of course, attributed to an anxiety to see his daughter. Under that impression, Sir John hastened to do him honour; and, on the morning in question, he ushered Sir Foster into the boudoir himself, with the politeness and consideration due to a gentleman, and a fond father visiting a beloved child.

Astonishment was depicted in his countenance, when he beheld his guest, *sans céremonie*, take possession of the lounging chair, and, after placing his hat upon a work-table, begin, as was his wont, to hum an air and tap his boot, without offering a word of compliment, or even addressing the daughter he had ridden four miles to see. There was something extraordinary, he fancied, in the quiet smile bestowed upon Sir Foster by Lady Wetheral, and he was much displeased at Miss Kerrison's sudden movement to examine her father's pockets, without bestowing a word of filial obeisance to a parent she had not seen for some weeks; yet did the truth escape his unsuspicious mind. It never entered into his heart to believe his expressed resolutions were unheeded. His good taste was shocked at the style of Sir Foster's entrance into a lady's sitting-room, and he did not remain to endure its continuance. He retired again to his study;

secure, at least, that such a man could never propitiate Clara, however strongly his lady's wishes might point that way.

So far all things combined again to favour Lady Wetheral's plans and hopes. It seemed as though Fortune went hand in hand with her thoughts, and that Fate set his seal upon her wish. Sir Foster's constant visits produced much remark, and prepared the way for her last stroke —a stroke which was to end all further suspense, and decide for ever the happy fortunes of Clara. Every event led the way gently and surely. Sir Foster had walked into the net with his own free will: he came each day to Wetheral, uninvited; and her ladyship could affirm, most seriously and truly, that no effort had been employed on her side to coerce Sir Foster's intentions. He had not even been asked to dinner. He had never been alone with Clara. If he came to visit his daughter, a parent possessed a right to demand admittance any where; but no attractions had been held out to allure him—no second-hand influence detained him. Sir Foster came without invitation, and remained without any inducements beyond his own pleasure. Sir Foster, therefore, prepared his own destiny; for Lady Wetheral, anxious to preserve her daugh-

ter's peace of mind, thought it now high time to understand upon what terms they were in future to meet.

To be so very regularly at Wetheral—to sit with herself and daughter daily, uninvited, and without inquiring for Sir John—wore an appearance which the world could express only in its conventional language, as "paying his addresses to Miss Wetheral." Young ladies had feelings, which must be cared for; they had sensibility, which should not be wounded with impunity. There was a part which every parent should act with firmness towards a young girl, whose affections were trifled with; and she would undertake the painful task of leading Sir Foster to explain his sentiments, herself. Clara was to engage Miss Kerrison, the following morning, in a walk round the garden, at the hour of Sir Foster's visit; and Lady Wetheral would soon penetrate his intentions. If all went well, the window of the boudoir was to be thrown open; in which case, Clara was to appear as by accident. If Sir Foster was very resolute and ungallant, all would remain closed; but she would not allow a doubt, in her own mind, to arise upon the subject.

At breakfast, on the eventful morning, Lady Wetheral issued her orders to the butler—

"When Sir Foster Kerrison comes, show him into the drawing-room."

Sir Foster was shown into the drawing-room, accordingly.

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X

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